

MAGIC IS FUN

MAGIC FOR EVERYONE

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True Ghost Stories, The Coming Science, etc.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW POWER PUBLICATIONS

NEW YORK

WEHMAN BROS.

712 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N.Y.

MZC
00-4410

PUBLISHED BY NEW POWER PUBLICATIONS

441 LEXINGTON AVENUE, NEW YORK 17

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

THERE is no more fascinating study, when once an interest in the subject has been aroused, than conjuring—or, as it is popularly called, “Magic.” One of the most delightful of all pastimes is the inventing and performing of new tricks, and watching their effect upon the audience—who do not know the secrets of the various “sleights” performed. We all know how fascinating the professional conjuror’s entertainment is,—and how mystifying! So I propose to take my readers,—in the present book,—into the very heart of the mystery—to explain exactly how the important and really effective tricks are performed—and not merely the “workings” of a few parlour tricks, which are out-of-date, and easy of detection. After reading this volume, the would-be magician will find himself possessed of a wealth of secrets, and a stock of information which will enable him to give an entertainment as good as many seen upon the public stage—if he will but give the necessary amount of time and trouble to developing and studying the tricks.

And now a few words of general advice:

Professor Hoffmann, in his book “Modern Magic,” gives the following preliminary instructions to the would-be magician, which I cannot do better than to quote here. He says:

"The first rule to be borne in mind by the aspirant is this: '*Never tell your audience beforehand what you are going to do.*' If you do so you at once give their vigilance the direction which it is most necessary to avoid, and increase tenfold the chances of detection. We will give an illustration. There is a very good trick in which the performer, after borrowing a handkerchief, gives it to some one to hold. When it is returned, it proves to be torn into small pieces. It is again handed to the holder, who is instructed, in order to restore it, to rub it in a particular manner; but when again unfolded it is found in a long strip. These effects are produced by successive adroit substitutions, and the whole magic of the trick consists in the concealment at the particular moment at which the substitution is effected. Now if you were to announce to the audience beforehand that it was about to appear in several pieces, or in a long strip, they would at once conjecture that the trick depended upon an exchange, and, their whole vigilance being directed to discover the moment of that exchange, you would find it all but impossible to perform the trick without detection. If, on the other hand, you merely roll up the handkerchief, and ask some one to hold it, the audience, not knowing what you are about to do, have no reason to suspect that you handed him a substitute; and when the transformation is exhibited, the opportunity of detection will already have passed away.

"It follows as a practical consequence of this first rule, that *you should never perform the same trick twice upon the same evening.* The best trick loses half its effect upon repetition, but besides this, the audience know exactly what is coming, and have all their faculties directed to finding out at what point you cheated their eyes upon the first occasion. It is sometimes hard to resist an *encore*, but a little tact will get you out of difficulty, especially if you have studied, as every con-

juror should do, the variation and combination of tricks. There are a score of ways of vanishing a given article, and as many of reproducing it; and either one of the first may be used in conjunction with the second. Thus, by varying either the beginning or the end, you have, to some extent, a *new trick*. The power of doing this readily is very useful, and among other advantages will enable you to meet an *encore* by performing some other trick, having some element of similarity to that which you have just completed, but terminating in a different, and therefore in an unexpected, manner.

"The student must cultivate from the outset the art of 'talking' and especially the power of using his eyes and his tongue *independently* of the movement of his hands. To do this, it will be necessary to prepare beforehand not only what he intends to *do*, but what he intends to *say*, and to rehearse frequently and carefully even the simplest trick before attempting it in public. It is surprising how many little difficulties are discovered upon first attempting to carry into effect even the clearest written directions; and nothing but practice will overcome these difficulties. The novice may be encouraged by assuming, as he safely may, that the most finished of popular performers was once as awkward as himself, and were he to attempt any unfamiliar feat, would probably be as awkward still."

The one great essential is *practice*, and appropriate "talk," or, as it is called "patter," accompanying each trick, and in which consists a large part of the illusion. I would advise the amateur conjuror to practise each trick over and over again in private before a large mirror, hung opposite his table, so that he may see how each movement would appear to an onlooker. If the magician desires to practise passing a coin from one hand to another, let us say (or at least pretending to

do so, while in reality keeping the coin in the hand from which it was supposedly taken), the best method of procedure would be really to take the coin several times with the other hand, and observe the movements closely in the mirror. Then, pretend to take the coin, and see what differences, if any, exist between the motions in the first case and in the second. Only by such practice, continued for many hours in private, can dexterity be attained, and a successful performance guaranteed.

I have before remarked upon the importance of "patter," or talk, during each trick. It may seem strange to the reader that the majority of well-known magicians learn their patter just as the actor learns his part, and says exactly the same things each night, accompanying each trick. The object of this "patter" is to distract the attention of the audience, at the critical moment, away from the object or hand which should be watched, and to some other object or the other hand,—thus concealing the method of performing the trick. As I have said in an earlier work ("Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism," p. 49):

"I must first of all call the reader's attention to one or two rules which every conjuror learns at the commencement of his study, and which he learns to apply so constantly that they become second nature to him. The first is: *Never let the eyes rest on the hand that is performing the sleight, but always on the other hand, or on some object on the table, or elsewhere*, as this will have a tendency to draw the eyes of the audience to that point also. The sitters or audience will always look at the point closely watched by the magician—their eyes have a tendency to follow his; and wherever he looks, there will the onlooker look also. Needless to say the magician makes use of this fact, and many tricks and illusions are dependent upon it for their suc-

cessful accomplishment. Whenever the magician looks intently at one hand, therefore, the *other* hand should be watched, as it is a sure sign that *that* is the hand which is performing the trick.

"By awakening interest in some unimportant detail, the conjuror concentrates their attention on some false point, or, negatively, diverts it from the main object, and we all know the senses of an untrained person are pretty dull. When causing the disappearance of some object, and the conjuror counts 'one, two, three!' the object must really disappear before three, not at three, because, the attention of the public being diverted to three, they do not notice what happens at one and two.

"An especially successful method of diversion is founded upon the human craze for imitation. The conjuror counts on this in many cases. He always looks in the direction where he wants the attention of his public, and does everything himself that he wants the public to do. If the trick is in the left hand, the conjuror turns sharply to the person to his right—presuming, correctly, that the spectators will make the same movement, and will not notice what is going on in the left hand. Every sharp, short remark will for a moment at least divert the eyes from the hands, and direct them to the mouth, according to the above-mentioned law of imitation.

"The successful conjuror has carefully studied beforehand every movement that is made, every word that is spoken, during a conjuring performance, and has seen that these all fit naturally into place, and help conceal the real workings of the trick. The right and left hands must be trained to operate independently, and without the need of looking at either. Many conjurors practise doing two separate things at the same time, one, with either hand, and the ability to do this is essential. Above all, the performer must be full of

conscious self-possession, and feel himself the master of the situation, no less than to feel the ability to cope with any emergencies that may arise."

There is an old saying that, "the quickness of the hand deceives the eye." Such, however, is by no means the case. It is seldom or never that the hands of the magician move so quickly that their movement cannot be detected. The secret of the illusion consists rather in the proper distraction of attention. Do *not* cultivate quick movements; at the same time, do not be painfully slow. Endeavour to present your tricks in an easy-going, quiet, graceful manner. Do not be over-hurried at any time; and, above all, give your audience ample time to see each object and take in the state of affairs generally, before proceeding to make any change.

Should a hitch occur in the carrying out of the program, such as the accidental dropping of an article,—or for some other cause,—try not to become confused, but endeavour to make the audience believe that this was what you expected, and was, in reality, part of the trick. Conclude the trick as best you can by some other method if that be possible. In conjuring performances more than on any other occasion is quickness of *brain* and *thought* necessary—far more necessary than quickness of hand.

The amateur need not be disappointed to find that the majority of tricks, when explained, are extremely simple, and that the most extraordinary illusions turn out to be little more than the simplest possible feats when properly explained. The would-be magician must remember that, to an audience who does not know the secret, these feats appear just as marvellous as they did to him before he knew their secret. Further, each audience in turn will be mystified by the *same* tricks, so that the amateur need not feel that he must be constantly procuring new tricks; since, so long as his audi-

ence varies, the old feats will be just as new to each audience in turn.

The Dress.—The usual attire of the modern magician is the conventional evening dress, but I have known performers to adopt various fancy costumes. For instance, after the vogue of “Ching Ling Foo” became so great, many of the lesser conjurors attired themselves as a “heathen chinee”; others attired themselves as Mephistopheles, which is rather an elaborate costume for the amateur to provide for himself. Many costumes may in fact be adopted, but unless one is very expert, the tails of the evening dress coat are indispensable.

When this ordinary evening dress is used, the tails of the coat are each provided with a large pocket, known as the “*profonde*,” the mouth of which is on a level with the knuckles, and sloped slightly to the side. These pockets, which are usually seven inches square, are lined with buckram, and sewn on rather full, to keep them constantly open. They are used to contain a “load” for hat tricks, etc.,* also to vanish articles, such as watches, eggs, balls, etc.

In addition to these pockets, two others, known as “*pochettes*” are sewn on the trousers. These are sewn on rather full at the back of the thigh, on a level with the knuckles, and covered by the tails of the coat; they are useful to contain rings, coins, or other small articles, required in the course of the performance.

There are also two pockets known as the “breast pockets,”—one on each side of the coat. These should be of a size large enough to contain a dinner plate, and should be made with the bottom sloping a little toward the back, to prevent articles placed in them from falling out. The opening should be perpendicular, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches

* By the term “to load” an article into a hat, we mean to introduce it, unobserved by the spectators. The article thus introduced is known as “the load.”

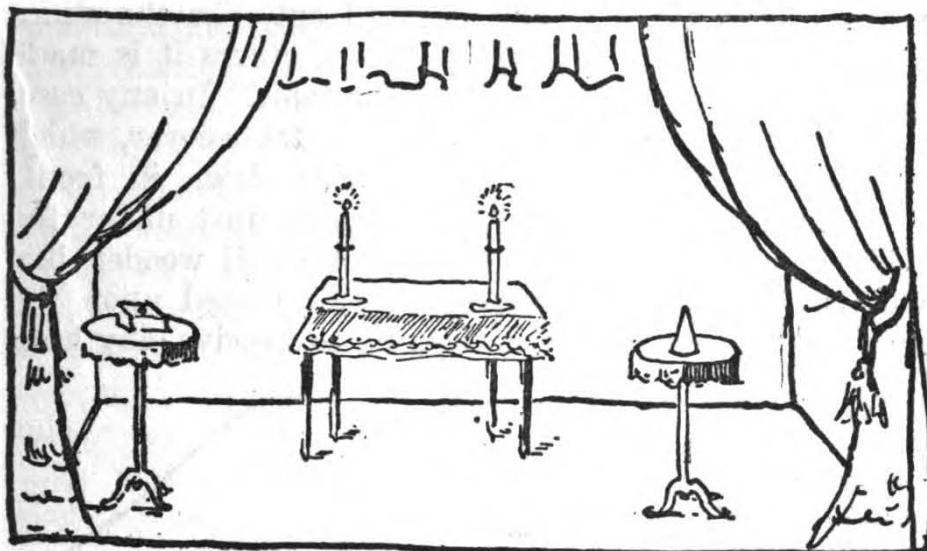
from the edge of the coat. These are loaded with rabbits, doves, etc., or any large or cumbersome article required for magical production.

The collar should be of the ordinary "stand up" pattern, and one size larger than that used for everyday wear. It will be found extremely useful to vanish small articles, such as coins, rings, handkerchiefs, and the like. When it is necessary to regain possession of a ring, coin, or handkerchief vanished in that way, it is well to have a small silk handkerchief arranged between the shirt collar and the side of the neck. Otherwise, the article might be vanished beyond all recovery.

Round the bottom part of the performer's waistcoat* should be sewn a small piece of elastic, of the kind known as "garter elastic," stretched taut, but not so tight as to wrinkle the cloth from the outside. The effect of this is to make the waistcoat (or "vest," as it is called in America) fit snugly to the body; and consequently any object, such as a small ball, placed beneath the waistcoat-band, will be retained there by pressure against the body,—though it can easily be obtained by the performer by the simple process of bringing the hand up to the waistcoat, and slightly pulling it away from his body, when, the pressure being released, the article will drop into his hand. On the contrary, an object may be placed under the vest, and will be retained there. This is technically known as "vesting."

The arrangement of the stage may be somewhat like that shown in Figure 1—a centre table, two small side tables, and if necessary chairs and other accessories at the back.

* There exist certain differences in terminology between the English and American magicians. For instance, the card which is always called a "Knave" in England, is usually called a "Jack" in America; the two and three spots, similarly, are called the "deuce" and "tray." Similarly, a "waistcoat" in England is usually called a "vest" in America, etc. In the present book I have not confined myself to the choice of one or the other, but have used either, as most convenient.



Arrangement of Stage.

FIG. 1

The Table.—There are a great many tricks which can be performed without the aid of a special table, but it is essential in a large number of tricks. It is provided with—

The Servante.—This is a secret shelf behind the performer's table, upon which are placed the various articles that are to be magically produced; and also articles which have been magically vanished. There are several kinds of *servantes*, which I will describe later.

In the absence of any specially prepared table, a *servante* may be supplied by pulling out the drawer of any ordinary table about six inches, and throwing a cloth over the whole, the cloth being pushed well into the drawer, so as to form a pad, to deaden all sound when an article is dropped upon it.

The *servante*-proper, however, is a shelf, almost but not quite as long as the table, and about six inches below the top. The table should be high enough for the *servante* to be just upon a level with the performer's knuckles. The entire length of it is covered with a heavy felt pad, to make all use of it inaudible. In some

tables this is made to slide in and out, like the slides in the pedestals of roll-top desks; in others it is made to fold on hinges at the back of the table. In any case, the table is covered with an ordinary table-cover, which is allowed to hang some eight inches down in front, while in the back it is secured trimly just under the table top by a few thumb-tacks. A small wooden box will be found useful, if padded and placed upon the *servante*. It will then be ready to receive anything

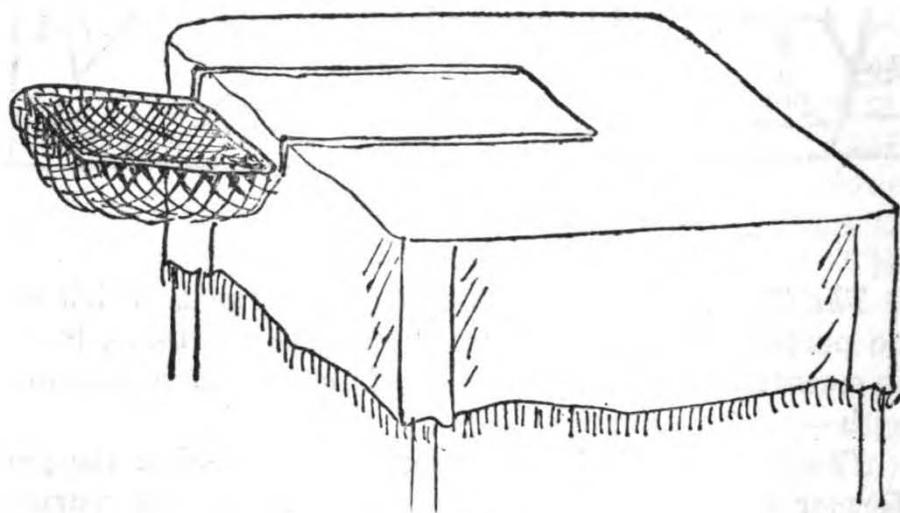


FIG. 2

that would naturally roll if it were placed free upon the *servante*.

The height of the table must be determined by the magician's stature, but the *servante* should always be about half a foot below the top, because then it will be found possible for the would-be magician to pick up, or lay down many articles without a corresponding movement of the body, and without the need of glancing down with his eyes,—a most disastrous performance.

Other very useful *servantes* are made of fish net, of the closely woven variety, and are known as “*bag-servantes*.” (See Fig. 2.) These are exceedingly

useful appliances,—as large, fragile articles, such as a glass tumbler, may be dropped even from a distance, and the *bag-servante* will retain them, and give no sign of their presence.

By a useful little addition this *servante* is capable of being attached to *any* table, without injury thereto. If the two wire arms of the *bag-servante* be extended about two feet, and connected at their ends,—as shown in the illustration—it may be placed flat on the top of the table, and a thick cloth placed over it. If, now, one or two pieces of apparatus be placed upon the wires, these will hold the *servante* firmly in place, and articles may be freely dropped into the bag, without fear of being upset, or showing any tell-tale bulge in the table-cloth. This device renders it possible to utilize *any* table instantly; and no screws, etc., are necessary, in order to attach it or hold it in place. These *servantes* are very often fastened to the back of a chair—in fact they can be hidden in a variety of places about the stage, and, because of their comparatively diminutive size, their presence is quite unsuspected by the audience.

MUSIC-STAND AS SIDE TABLE

A very useful little side table can be made by using a music-stand, which is stood upon its tripod legs, on one side of the stage. If the music-stand be opened out flat (that is, like a table-top) it will hold a number of small objects—handkerchiefs, boxes, etc.; while if it be opened up *at an angle*, the slope being away from the audience, a small “*bag-servante*” can readily be hidden behind it, without suspicion. This is readily covered by the *slope* of the music-stand itself. In many ways this little device will be found most useful. (See Fig. 3.)

The Wand.—This is a light wand, about fifteen inches long, and half an inch in diameter. It is one of the most useful appurtenances in the magician’s possession,

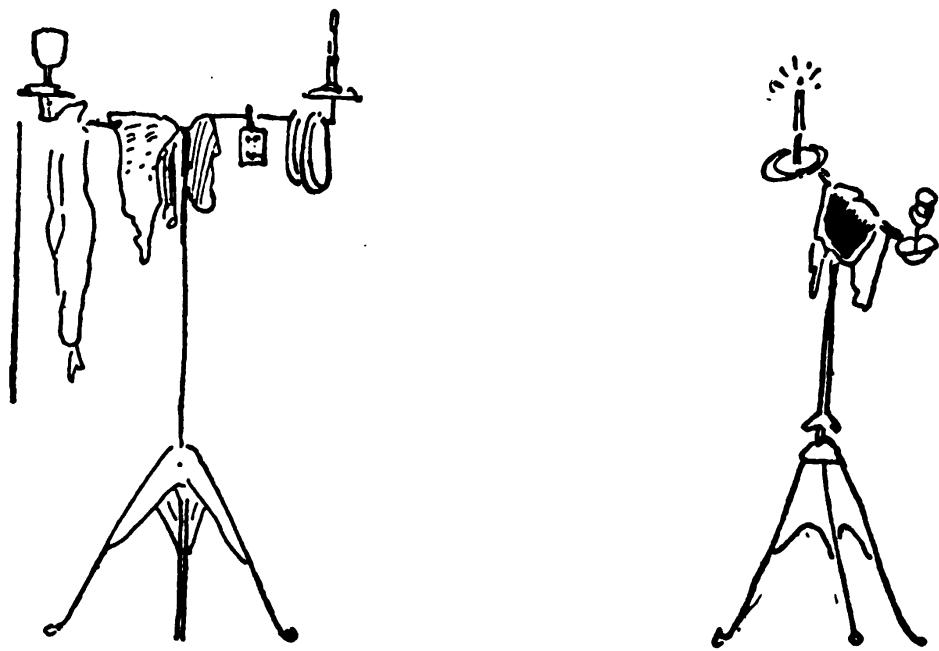


FIG. 3

—though to an observer its use seems to be merely an affectation,—or at best, an entirely unnecessary ornamental touch. Yet, if the magician wishes to palm an object, or a number of objects,—as, for instance, a stack of coins,—how effectually the slight curve of his hand is concealed, if he picks up the wand with his fingers! Then, too, if he needs to turn to his table for an instant, the ever-ready wand, lying in a convenient place, forms the excuse; and he may reach after it, and, while stretching forth one hand, and attracting all eyes toward it, quietly drop a palmed article from the other hand on to the *servante*. Then, too, the wand has been the magician's emblem since the memory of man, and the would-be magician cannot do better than to make it his first investment.

PREPARATION OF THE HANDS

A few words upon the preparation of the hands, before giving a conjuring entertainment, may not be out of place.

First of all, in order to render the hands supple, and take the stiffness out of your fingers, the following exercise is advised: Extend the arms from the shoulders, holding them rigid, while allowing the hands to hang limp. Now, shake the arms (while holding them tense and rigid) violently up and down for about thirty seconds, during which time the wrists and fingers "flop" about at a furious rate. Now, grasp one hand with the other, in front of you, and vigorously massage it *outwards*, continuing over the palm and up each finger. *Never rub toward* the palm. Do this with one hand, and then the other, until they begin to perspire. Now, plunge them into water as hot as you can stand; hold them there a few seconds, then dry rapidly. Then place a few drops of glycerine in each hand, and massage them as before. Then dry again.

If your hands have a natural tendency to be sticky and moist, I would recommend plunging them into ice-cold water, immediately after the hot plunge; then rubbing them with alcohol, allowing them to dry in the air. A little talcum powder applied to the fingers and palm will prove most effective.

This preparation will render your hands capable of performing the various sleights neatly and efficiently.

Having thus introduced the reader to the preliminaries of dress, the table, and other essentials (an understanding of which was however necessary), I shall proceed to an actual exposition of the various tricks; and shall begin with *card* tricks, which are always popular, as many of them may be performed in any house, with any pack of cards, and with but a moment's preparation. After considering these, we shall pass on to coin tricks, tricks with handkerchiefs, watches, eggs, and numerous sleights of other descriptions. In this way, we shall work up from the simplest to the more complex and difficult, as we proceed.

CHAPTER II

CARD TRICKS

I SHALL begin by describing a few simple card tricks, since they are always well received by an audience, and a pack of playing cards may be found in almost any house. Any one who can perform a few neat card tricks need never feel dismayed when suddenly called upon to display his skill, since it is—or should be—at his very finger ends. Any pack of cards may be used in the following experiments, as none of them involve any difficult sleight-of-hand. The French cards will, however, be found the easiest to handle, and I should advise the amateur to practise with these smaller cards of more convenient size, since only a full-grown man, possessing large hands, can properly conceal cards of the regular size in a manner which it is necessary to do, when performing some of the tricks to be described.

Before detailing the methods of the numerous card tricks which may be performed with an ordinary pack of cards, and with but little preliminary training, it is first of all necessary to describe a few of the methods that may be utilized in order to "discover" and "disclose" a given card. By the term to "discover" a card, we mean the method by which the card is made known to the performer. By "disclose" a card, we mean the actual exhibiting of the card to the audience. The disclosure thus shows that you have found out the card chosen by some magical means, and that you are now exhibiting it to the audience.

There are many ways of discovering a chosen card; but the following are among the best methods not re-

quiring sleight-of-hand: I shall describe each of them in turn.

METHOD NUMBER I

Spread the pack fan-wise, open, toward some member of your audience, asking him to choose a card. Have a card freely chosen, and taken from the pack unseen by the rest, and hand the pack out to be shuffled. When you have received the pack again, spread it out fan-wise, as it was previously, and ask your volunteer to insert his card—which he has noted—in any part of the pack he likes. As he is doing this, your forefinger, of the right hand, which is naturally under the cards, comes forward and meets the chosen card. The instant you feel it, press the finger-nail into the edge of the card,—thus making a slight indentation, which will be quite unnoticed by any one but yourself. The mark must be made very lightly. The pack may be shuffled again, and when you have gone through it carefully, the chosen card may be picked out with but little difficulty.

METHOD NUMBER II

Offer the pack to be shuffled, and have one card chosen as before. When the card is being noted, grip the pack tightly and press strongly on the ends of the pack,—holding its centre in the other hand, thus making them form an arch, or bow, as it were,—the curve being very slight. Hand the pack to the person holding the chosen card, and ask him to return it to the pack, and shuffle it as much as he chooses. When the pack is returned to you, you will have no difficulty in picking out the chosen card, since that is the only straight card in the deck,—all the rest being slightly curved.

N.B.—Great care must be taken not to bend the pack *too much*, as this would instantly disclose the secret.

Only a very slight curvature is necessary. A quick pressure in the opposite direction will make all straight again.

METHOD NUMBER III

First, notice the bottom card. Then take the pack in the left hand, holding it with the fingers on one side, and the thumb on the other. Secretly draw down the bottom card about half an inch. Now let the right hand approach the pack, and, with the first and second fingers, draw down the cards, one by one, half an inch

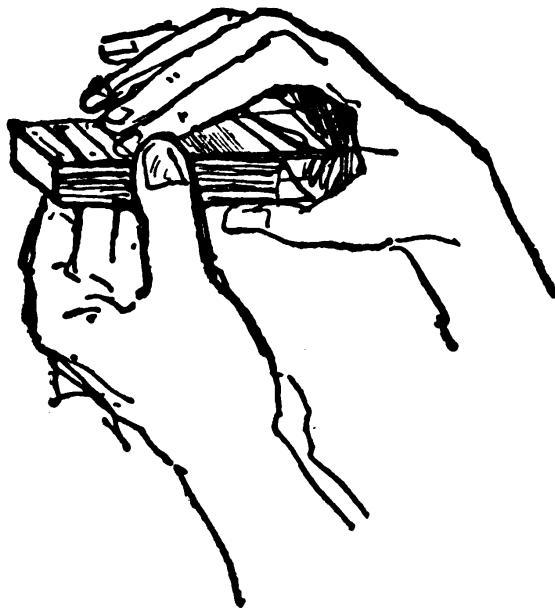


FIG. 4

or so (beginning with the top card and so on) inviting your audience to stop you at any card they choose. (See Fig. 4.) The thumb of the right hand has remained beneath the pack in contact with the bottom card. The thumb should have been previously moistened slightly, so as to make it adhere to the bottom card. When your audience has indicated the card at which they desire you to stop, draw all the cards so far selected completely away from the pack, *but draw with them also, unknown to the audience, the bottom card, known*

to you. If this be done quickly, it is impossible to detect that the bottom card is drawn away with the upper cards. Since, however, you know what the bottom card is, you can disclose it at your leisure by one means or another to be given presently. It is needless to say that the bottom card is really supposed to be the last card at which you stopped in your passage through the pack.

FALSE SHUFFLES

The effect of the above trick may be greatly enhanced by shuffling the pack, after having noticed (secretly, of course), the bottom card. This apparently does away with any previous arrangement. The object of the shuffle is to leave the pack, or certain cards in it exactly in the same position as they were before. Shuffles of this kind, which leave certain cards undisturbed, are known as "false shuffles." There are many ingenious methods for shuffling the pack in this manner, but for our present purposes, I shall describe but one or two methods, which leave the bottom card still at the bottom, or the top card at the top. One method of effecting this is as follows:

Take the pack in the left hand in the ordinary way, and shuffle it with the right, leaving a number of cards alternately at the front and rear of the pack; that is, leave some at the top, then some at the bottom, again some at the top, and so on—taking care that the last batch shall always be at the bottom of the pack. It will be observed that this leaves the bottom card always in its original place.

Another method is as follows: Divide the pack equally into two packets, seeing that the card known to you is on the bottom of one of these packs, and noting in which pack it is. Now lift the corners of the two packets, and let the cards fall alternately as nearly as possible,—the corners overlapping, so that, when the shuffle is finished,

the two packets form one entire pack. The only thing you have to attend to here is to see that the card known to you falls on to the table *first*. This leaves that particular card still at the bottom of the pack. This method may also be employed for keeping in sight the *top* card (in which case, of course, this card falls *last*).

Having thus described two of the many methods of false shuffling, I shall now return to the various other methods of finding the card chosen. The two following methods, which are almost tricks in themselves, are entirely different from any of the methods so far explained.

METHOD NUMBER IV

Take twenty-one cards (any cards) from the pack, and have these thoroughly shuffled. Deal them into three heaps, by adding one card at a time to each heap in turn. Continue this until the whole twenty-one have been dealt,—making three packs of seven cards each. While this dealing is going on, one of the company has mentally chosen a card, and noticed, at your request, in which *heap* (of seven cards) it has fallen. You now ask him to indicate to you the heap (not the card) in which his chosen card rests. Place this pack or heap *between* the other two heaps, placing one above it and one below. Deal a second time, asking him mentally to select the *same* card, and at the end of the dealing, to indicate the pack in which it has fallen the second time. This pack is again placed between the other two packs, and the cards are dealt a third time. The same card is mentally chosen for the third time by your volunteer, and for a third time he indicates the pack in which it falls. Now, no matter what card he has chosen, if you have followed these instructions the selected card will always be found to be the middle card of the pack, as dealt for the third time. If, therefore, you have carefully noted the fourth or middle card of each heap when dealing for the third time,—you know immediately which card

is chosen, and you may proceed to produce it when convenient, or to "read his mind" and tell him the card he has selected.

METHOD NUMBER V

This method is almost the same as the last, save in some minor details. In this case, you place the chosen heap undermost (instead of in the centre), thereby bringing it uppermost when you turn the cards over, and deal them again. Repeat as before, placing the chosen heap undermost each time. Note the *first card* turned up on the third dealing. This will be the card chosen.

METHOD NUMBER VI

Another very good way of finding a card placed in the pack is the following: Place two small dabs of wax upon the surface of one card, and press upon this another card, so that they adhere together. (Of course the cards must face the *same way*, so that they appear as one card.) The upper card projects the merest fraction of an inch over the lower card, however—hardly enough to be seen, but capable of being felt with the fingers. This constitutes a "long card."

Now if a borrowed card be placed in the pack, next to this card,—or brought next to it by means of a pass,—you can instantly locate the selected card by cutting the pack at the long card,—when the selected card will be exposed to view, or may be "disclosed" in any way you see fit. This is a very simple, yet very excellent, way of discovering a given card—while utilizing *any* pack of cards, and needs but a moment's preparation.

METHODS OF DISCLOSURE

Having now briefly described the principal methods by which a chosen card may be discovered, I shall proceed to give the principal methods in which any given

card, being discovered,—or made known to the performer,—is disclosed to the audience.

METHOD NUMBER I

For this method, the chosen card must be worked to the top of the pack. If it is there already, well and good; but if not, it must be brought there by some means or other. This is generally an easy matter,—even without sleight-of-hand, and can usually be effected under the pretence of glancing through the pack. When the card is once at the top, you may give a false shuffle, to throw your onlookers off the scent, and then push the top card out sideways, so as to make it project throughout its whole length about an inch beyond the rest of the cards. Now, let the pack fall onto the table, and it will be found that the resistance of the air will cause the top card to turn over, and appear face upwards,—all the other cards remaining face downwards.

METHOD NUMBER II

By some means or other get the chosen card to the top of the pack. Now, slightly moisten the first and second fingers of the right hand, and take hold of the pack with fingers above, thumb below. Jerk the hand containing the pack smartly downwards, at the same time slightly relaxing the fingers, and it will be found that the entire pack falls to the floor, with the exception of the chosen card, which will stick to the moistened fingers. This is the only card left,—and the card selected.

METHOD NUMBER III

This method is very similar to the last. Get the chosen card to the *bottom* of the pack. Moisten the fingers slightly, and take hold of the pack with fingers below, thumb above. With the disengaged hand, strike the pack smartly, at the same moment slightly relaxing your hold on the pack. It will be found that the entire

pack falls to the ground, with the exception of the bottom card which adheres to the fingers.

METHOD NUMBER IV

This method of disclosing a given card requires some little address on the part of the performer for its successful presentation. It does not require quickness of the hands, however, but of the brain. This method is a very excellent one, and, in the hands of an expert, it is not only convincing, but little short of miraculous. As it is given here, of course, in bare outline, the trick doubtless seems very simple, but try it once on some unsuspecting friend, and watch his face as he turns up the card! The method of disclosure is as follows:—

Get the chosen card either to the top or bottom of the pack, and give two or three false shuffles. Now cut the pack in halves. Ask your assistant, or volunteer, to choose one of these packs. If he chooses the pack which does *not* contain his card, you say, "Very well. Take it, please." And you proceed with the other. If, on the contrary, he should choose the pack in which you know his selected card *does* appear, you simply remark, "This one? Very good. We shall proceed with the one you choose, and lay this other one aside,—as we shall not need it." You thus see how to proceed in every case, until you get down to the very last card in the pack—the card chosen. If he choose the pack in which the chosen card appears, you interpret it as meaning that you are to proceed with this pack; if he choose the other pack, you take it to mean that he wishes that pack laid aside, and, of course, there is then only the other pack left for proceeding with the trick. It is not very wise or safe to continue this "forcing" process too long, as many people are apt to discover the secret after five or six cuts. Up to that limit, however, in the hands of an expert,—especially if the cutting is done rapidly,—it is safe to continue cutting and

forcing,—being careful to allow your victim no time to think or reason over his choice. Everything should be done quickly, but do not give the appearance of hurrying. Many persons are “taken in” by being allowed to choose two out of three packs, but the idea is exactly the same. If he should choose the two packs in which his card does *not* appear, these packs are laid aside, and the third pack, containing the chosen card, redivided. This greatly reduces the number of cuts necessary. If, however, he choose the pack in which his card *does* appear, and one of the others, these two are used, and the third one laid aside. The two remaining packs are now offered for selection, and the choosing goes on as before. The cutting and choosing is continued until only two cards are left, when the choice is forced as before, and your assistant is asked to turn up the only remaining card on the table—which, he finds to his amazement, is the card originally chosen!

TO “FORCE” A CARD

This is one of the first principles which the would-be magician must learn to master. By the heading, he will have inferred that the purpose of this subterfuge is to “force” a certain card,—already known to the performer,—upon a spectator. At first sight, this may seem well-nigh impossible to the student; but let me assure him that practically no card manipulator does without it. Professor Hoffmann, in his admirable work, suggests that the card, after having been “passed” from either the top or bottom of the pack to the centre (where it is kept in place by means of the forefinger), be extended and exposed a trifle more than the others, in this way relying upon the spectator to take it. While having the utmost respect for Professor Hoffmann’s method, I have found, from years of experience, that since this force has become so generally known, the average person, on seeing a card protruding, will pur-

posely avoid it,—which is fatal! I have overcome this difficulty, to a great degree, by using a method of my own, which, though on the same general principle, is slightly different—and in conjuring, it is often the merest detail which will make or ruin a trick.

In taking the cards and running them from the left to the right hand, in a sort of fan-shape,—requesting one to be chosen,—I purposely expose one card a little further, as in the old method, which is *not* the card to be selected. This is almost invariably *avoided*, and I wait until the fingers of the spectator almost touch the cards, when, at the moment that his fingers are about to close on one (the cards being rapidly moved along), I come to the card to be forced, and virtually place it in his fingers by a slight forward push. In other words, I do not expose my card until the last second. I am pleased to say that I have rarely had this method fail, and been forced to suffer the humiliation of a dreaded “fiasco.” It is hardly necessary to say that, when a wrong card is chosen, another trick is performed with it, and the right card afterwards forced upon some second member of the audience, more easily influenced than the first!

To Make the Pass.—This is a sleight which is employed in order to reverse the top and bottom portions of a pack. It is of frequent utility, as bringing to the top or bottom of the pack, as the case may be, a certain card of which the performer desires to obtain possession. It will require considerable practice to perform this perfectly, though a number of the most striking and effective tricks depend upon it. The majority of the tricks depending upon the “pass” I have omitted in the following pages, selecting those which may be accomplished without its aid. Nevertheless, as there are a few which depend more or less upon it, I shall describe the best method, which is performed with both hands.

"Hold the pack in the left hand lengthwise, with the face downwards, as if about to deal in any game. In this position the thumb will naturally be on one side of the pack, and the four fingers on the other. Insert the top joint of the little finger, immediately above those cards which are to be brought to the top of the pack

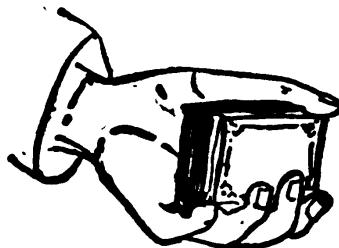


FIG. 5

(and which are now undermost), and let the remaining three fingers close naturally on the remaining cards, which are now uppermost. (See Fig. 5.)

"In this position you will find that the uppermost part of the pack is held between the little finger, which is underneath, and the remaining fingers, which are upon it. Now advance the right hand, and cover the

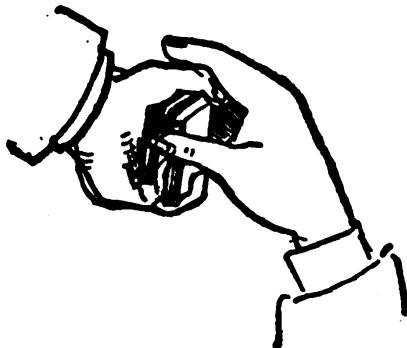


FIG. 6

pack with it. Grasp the lower portion of the pack, lengthwise, between the second finger, at the upper, and the thumb at the lower end, the left thumb lying slightly bent across the pack. Press the inner edge of the lower packet into the fork of the left thumb, so that the two packets will be as shown in Figure 6. Next draw away

the upper packet, by slightly extending the fingers of the left hand. At the same time, lift up the outer edge of the lower packet, till the edges of the two packets just clear each other (see Fig. 7), when by the mere act of closing the left hand, they will be brought together, as at first, save that they have changed places. Do this very slowly at first, aiming only at neatness and noiselessness of execution. At the outset, the task will be found somewhat difficult, but gradually the hands will be found to acquire a sort of sympathetic action; the different movements which have been de-



FIG. 7

scribed will melt, as it were into one, and the two packets will change places with such lightness and rapidity that they seem to actually pass through each other. A slight momentary depression and elevation of the hands (apparently a mere careless gesture), in the act of making the pass, will completely cover the transposition of the cards, which, in the hands of an adept, is invisible, even to the most watchful spectator." ("Modern Magic," pp. 12-13.)

THE LEFT-HANDED PASS (CHARLIER PASS)

This valuable single-handed pass is thus described by Professor Hoffmann, in his "More Magic," (pp. 9-10) :—

"The cards are taken in the left hand, supported by the second and third fingers and thumb, the little finger

taking up its position midway across the lower end of the cards, and the first finger remaining extended. The lower half of the pack is now allowed, by a slackening of the pressure of the thumb, to fall loose into the hand, as shown in Figure 8. The first finger then comes into play and lifts the outer edge of the lower packet until it touches the ball of the thumb, as in Figure 9. The second and third fingers now relax their pressure, thereby allowing the outer edge of the upper packet to pass the edge of the lower packet, as in Figure 10. The



FIG. 8

FIG. 9

FIG. 10

first finger is again extended, allowing the two halves of the pack to coalesce,—and the pass is made.”

TO “SLIP” A CARD

This is one of the most useful subterfuges in the art of card manipulation, and is the foundation of some of the most astonishing card tricks.

First, note what the *top* card on the pack is. Shuffle the pack (using a false shuffle, so as to leave this card on the top), and, holding the pack face downwards, as if about to deal, with the four fingers of the left hand on the top of the pack, ask some one to cut the pack by inserting the blade of a knife, a pencil, or even the finger in any part they desire. The object, now, is to transfer the top card (which let us say is the ace of spades) to the top of the lower half of the deck, making

it appear that the pack was really cut at the ace of spades.

Let us assume, for the sake of clearness, that the blade of a knife has been inserted in the pack. The two halves of the pack, above and below, should be held open at the place where the insert was made, at about an angle of 45° , to enable the onlooker to see the card on the bottom of the *upper* half (above the blade), which, let us say, is the two of hearts. (Fig. 11.) Get

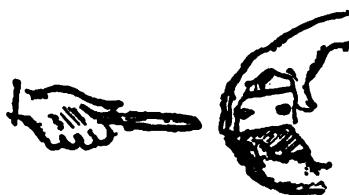


FIG. 11

his eyes off the cards for a moment by assuring him that you "would not deceive him for worlds," as he can plainly see the two of hearts, and he understands that it would be impossible to see or know the card which is *below* the knife. As you refer to the two of hearts, turn over the left hand, and point with the forefinger of the left hand, to the two of hearts. (Fig. 12.)

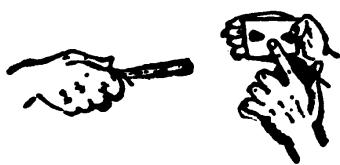


FIG. 12



FIG. 13

In the act of doing so, however, slip off the ace of spades (Fig. 13) from the top of the pack, with the second and third fingers, onto the top of the lower half, at the same instant rapidly withdrawing the upper half of the deck. This act is concealed by the turning of the left hand, and by the rapidity of the motion. Now,

with the forefinger of the right hand (which holds the upper half of the deck), point to the top card of the lower half,—which now is the ace of spades,—and which you have merely to ask him to look at, “without letting you see it.” You may then “disclose” the card in any manner you see fit—by “mind reading” or otherwise.

This useful sleight may be used in a variety of ways, a few of which I will suggest. For instance, a card is chosen and replaced in the pack (pass), shuffled (false shuffle), and brought to the top. A member of the audience is then requested to cut the pack with a knife, and, to his amazement, he finds that he has cut at his own card! It may serve as a “force” alone; but better than all these methods is what I have called the “Moist Card” and is as follows:

THE MOIST CARD

The performer hands the deck to be shuffled, and requests a card to be chosen. He now takes the deck while the card is being noted. He turns around and cuts the pack, requesting the onlooker to replace the card on the top of the lower half, which is entirely covered with the rest of the cards. The whole deck is then shuffled.

“Now,” says the conjuror, “if you will be so kind as to tell me the name of your card, I shall cause it to leave the pack completely and return only at my command.” No sooner has he spoken, than the onlooker names his card; the cards of the pack are counted out, one by one, and, sure enough, the chosen card is no longer in the pack!

To my mind, the beauty of the trick lies in its apparent fairness and the absence of any sleight-of-hand. The explanation, as you will see, is, as usual, simplicity itself.

The acute reader will doubtless have guessed that

when the pack "was cut," our old friend, "the slip" was employed. Quite true! But how? That I shall now explain.

When the conjuror's back was turned, he placed his right hand to his mouth, and quickly gathered with his first and second fingers a quantity of saliva from his tongue, and with it smears the back of the top card. Now, when he cuts the deck, he "slips" this wet card to the top of the lower half,—so that, when the chosen card is placed where he requests, it will, of course, be on top of the wet card. Now the upper half of the deck is put on, and evened up, and, while explaining what is about to happen, the performer continues to press the cards together under the pretence of performing some marvellous sleight by means of which the chosen card will melt into space.

The trick is now really accomplished, for the cards themselves will do the rest. You may first run through the pack, dealing them singly onto the table,—when to all appearances the card will have gone.

The reason for this is that the chosen card will adhere to the one which has been dampened, and, when counted, will appear as one card. There is no danger of the cards separating, as you will find by experiment. All you have to do, now, is to place your little finger on this "double" card, which can easily be distinguished from the others by its thickness, make the pass, and reproduce it in any way you desire.

THE RISING CARDS

I cannot do better than describe in this place an excellent little experiment known as "The Rising Cards." The performer passes the deck to his audience, who draw three cards from its midst. These three cards have been "forced," and the performer consequently knows exactly what cards are selected even before they are drawn. Expert "forcing" re-

quires a great deal of practice; and for the unskilled, it is better to procure a pack containing only three cards repeated over and over again. Thus, there are sixteen tens of hearts, sixteen aces of clubs, and sixteen jacks of diamonds. This is what is known as a "forcing pack," and may be had at any shop where conjuror's tricks are to be procured. In passing them to your audience know just where the tens end, and, spreading them out, ask one person to draw a card; then gather up all the tens, while apparently just shuffling the cards along, and spread out the section of aces,—asking another person to choose a card; and then, after shuffling along until the aces are gathered in, offer a third person the cards to draw from, and you know that the third card



FIG. 14

chosen is a jack of diamonds,—the second an ace of clubs, and the first a ten of hearts. Now, in another pack, placed on the *servante*, and exactly similar to the pack you have offered, you have affixed a black silk thread,—"the conjuror's best friend,"—to an indifferent card and *under* the first card that you had planned to "force" on the audience; then *over* an indifferent card, and *under* the next card planned to be selected by the audience, over an indifferent card, then *under* the third card planned to be selected, and lastly over the remaining half of the pack. (Fig. 14.) After the audience has drawn the three "forced" cards, they look at them, and return them to the pack, and the latter is shuffled. The performer now takes the pack in his right hand, and picks up a goblet with his left hand,—announcing that he will now make the three

selected cards rise from that goblet in the order in which they were drawn. He then calls attention to the fact that "it is an ordinary, transparent, glass goblet." While this is going on, all eyes are turned towards the goblet, and the performer's right hand carelessly drops behind the table, and exchanges the forcing pack for the prepared pack on the *servante*. This pack is immediately shown, and placed in the goblet,—care being taken to place it right side up. The performer retains hold of the thread, and, giving it a gentle pull, the first card rises, apparently of its own volition, but impelled to do so by the thread. With two more pulls, the other cards rise,—care being taken to avoid the appearance of any movement which would tell the audience the method of procedure. To wave the wand over the pack, or make mesmeric movements with the hand, is about as good a screen as anything. At the conclusion of the trick, a slight pull will disengage the waxed thread, and the pack may then be offered for examination.

ANOTHER METHOD

"There is a method of producing the rising card trick entirely without apparatus, and without the necessity of forcing particular cards. The performer in this case invites a person to draw a card, and when it is returned he slips this card to the bottom of the pack. He then makes a false shuffle, leaving it on the top, and offers the pack to a second person to draw. When he has done so, and before he replaces the card, the performer makes the pass to bring the card first drawn to the centre, so that the second card is placed upon it, and then makes the pass to bring them both together at the top. The process may be repeated with a third card. The three cards are thus drawn to the top of the pack, that last drawn lying uppermost. The performer now asks each person, beginning with the last who drew, to name his card, and, holding the pack

upright in his hand, the thumb on one side, and the third and fourth finger on the other, and the face of the pack towards the audience, (see Fig. 15), he causes the marked cards to rise, one by one by pushing them up from the back by alternate movements of the first and second fingers (which should previously have been moistened). If the cards be held squarely face forward to the audience, it will be impossible for them to tell

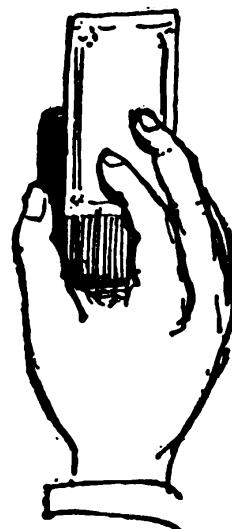


FIG. 15

that they do not rise from the middle of the pack." ("Modern Magic," pp. 129-130.)

CARD LEVITATION IMPROMPTU

This delightful novelty has puzzled many wise heads in the conjuring fraternity. The magician requests that two or three cards be chosen, which are returned to the pack and shuffled (pass and false shuffle). He then explains that, under certain conditions, it is possible to generate enough "magnetic influence" in the tip of his forefinger to "magnetize" a card. Suiting the action to the word, the conjuror rubs his forefingers together, and requests the name of the first chosen card,

which, let us suppose, is the two of clubs. The pack is now held by its lower end, between the left thumb and fingers, and his right forefinger, held in the position of pointing is placed about one inch above the pack. Slowly, he raises it two or three times without success; but, the third time, the chosen card follows his finger out of the pack! This is repeated with the second card, and finally with the third. When the last card is half-way out of the pack, the conjuror removes his hand, and the card slowly sinks back into the pack. The magician explains that this is because the "magnetism" was broken, when his hand was removed. The cards are then passed for examination.

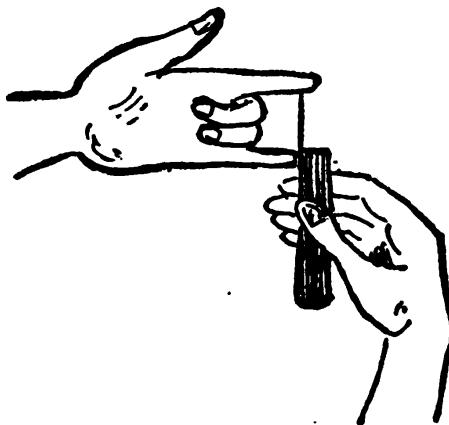


FIG. 16

By consulting the accompanying illustration, (Fig. 16), the solution will be made clear. The extended little finger carries up the card. The illusion may be added to greatly by failing in the first two or three attempts. The latter part of the trick,—that is, the descent of the card,—is accomplished by a slight relaxation by the fingers and thumb of the left hand, which can easily be acquired after a few moments' practice.

THURSTON'S METHOD

One of the most effective of Howard Thurston's card tricks he has named "The Thurston Rising Cards," and

it had the approval of so great a prestidigitateur as the senior Herrmann,—which is surely as good a recommendation as any trick can have. Mr. Thurston thus describes the trick in his book:

“The effect of this illusion to an audience is as follows:

“Five cards are selected haphazard,—not forced,—from an ordinary pack. The five cards are then handed to another member of the audience, with the request that he will replace the same and shuffle them into the pack thoroughly.

“The performer now returns to the stage and holds the pack with his left hand, with the faces of the cards toward the audience. He passes the right hand completely around the cards to prove that there is no thread, etc., in use. The right hand is now held about three feet above the left, which latter holds the cards. The performer next inquires the name of the first card selected, whereupon it immediately leaves the pack and soars as gracefully as a bird up to the right hand, where it is held between the fingers and thumb, the beauty of the experiment lying in the fact that the performer does not move a muscle during the rising of the card. The card is now placed on the front of the pack, and the second card called for, when it immediately ascends in the same manner as the first one. This is repeated until the five chosen cards have made their appearance.

“The performer is not compelled to stand in any particular part of the stage; in fact the trick can be just as successfully presented in any drawing-room without the aid of assistants, etc.

“As I desire to explain the secret of my Rising Card trick in as thorough a manner as possible, I shall describe each little detail from start to finish, so that no difficulty may arise in the mind of the conjuror who desires to add this to his repertoire.

"The principal secret of the illusion lies in the very ingenious piece of apparatus depicted in Figure 17. It resembles in principle the well-known self-coiling measuring tape. A piece of very thin but strong silk thread, say, about three to four feet long, is coiled on a drum within a cylindrical box or case. The thread can be drawn out to its full extent, but upon slight pressure being brought to bear on a little stud (not visible in the illustration) on the face of the box, it is gradually withdrawn, the slow action of the drum being brought about by a very weak internal spring. A, in the diagram, is a safety pin soldered to one side of the case, thus enabling the performer to attach it to the top of

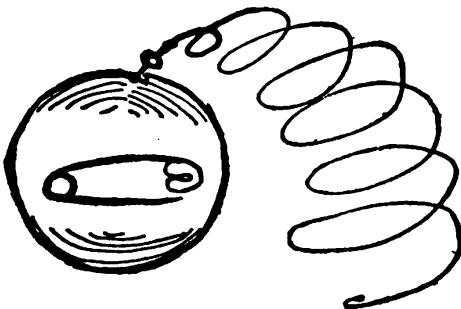


FIG. 17

his trousers between the suspender buttons on the left side. The thread is now pulled out about 2 feet 6 inches, a small pellet of soft wax being attached to the end. The wax is then affixed to the top vest button, the slack portion of the cord being tucked into the vest.

"The performer now invites five members of the audience to select cards. He collects them himself, and in the act of turning around to ask another spectator to shuffle the cards, changes the chosen five for five other cards, by means of the right hand *profonde* (a special pocket made at the height of the fingers in the coat tail). If this is done neatly the spectator never imagines but that he is shuffling the selected cards into the pack. On the return journey to the stage, there

is ample time and opportunity to regain possession of the chosen cards, which are palmed and placed on the top of the pack,—care being taken that they are in the correct order.

"Now, as the performer turns round to face the audience, he adroitly removes the wax from the vest button, and presses it on the back of the hindermost card. The right hand now passes round the cards and secures the thread between the first and second fingers, so that, when the right hand is held raised about three feet

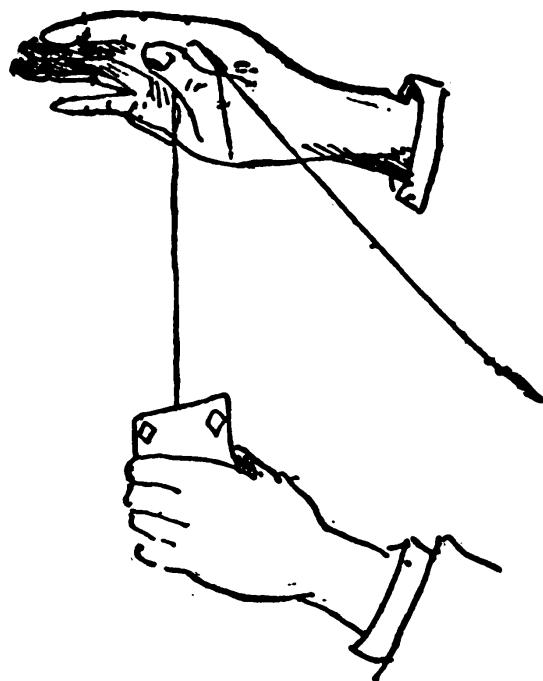


FIG. 18

above the left, as before described, the thread comes upward from the bottom of the vest, where the spring is secured, passes over the hand, and is fastened to the hindermost card by means of the wax. This thread, if of the correct thickness, is absolutely invisible even at close quarters.

"When the name of the card is called out the performer, with the elbow of the left arm, presses on the vest at the place where he knows the drum to be,—thus causing the thread to recoil, and the card to rise to the right hand. (Fig. 18.) The card is now replaced on the front of the pack, and, under cover of asking the name of the next card, the wax is fastened to the back card, and the same movements repeated. The rest of the cards are similarly dealt with."

A CHOSEN CARD CAUGHT UPON THE END OF AN
ORDINARY WALKING-STICK

A card is chosen by one member of the company, and is then put back into the pack and the whole shuffled. The entire number of cards are then tossed into the air, and the performer makes a slash at them with his walking-stick, and behold!—the card is seen to be dangling upon its end when the shower has subsided.



FIG. 19

The stick itself is not prepared, but the performer has a loose ferrule, which just fits over the ferrule upon the stick, and which is removable at pleasure. It will be seen, by referring to Figure 19, that there is upon the lower end of this removable tip, a little loop, or staple, through which the performer may pass a black silk thread,—the proper length of which will vary according to the height of the performer himself, and the length of the stick used.

One end of the thread should be fastened to the upper button of the performer's vest, and the other end to

the card which is to be caught. The card may rest in the pocket, just inside the left side of the performer's coat, until it is wanted, and the loose ferrule in the vest pocket.

A similar card is now forced upon the audience by means of the method explained on p. 23, or any of the methods hitherto explained, and when it is returned to the pack, the cards are shuffled. The performer, with stick in hand, now takes his place with his right side to the audience, and an assistant is placed opposite him, holding the cards. The walking-stick is held at the "hanging guard position" at broadsword,—the performer having previously taken an opportunity to slip the loose ferrule over the tip. He then requests the volunteer assistant to spread the pack fanwise, so that he may see the chosen card, and then, when the performer says "three" to toss them all up in the air, as high as possible.

When the cards are thrown, the performer makes a slash with his stick, the thread is drawn taut, and the card is seen to be hanging upon the point. The performer instantly grasps the loose intermediate position of the thread, and brings it down into the right hand, which holds the cane, and it is thus secured throughout its length against the stick. The left hand immediately travels to the tip, and removes the card, when the string may be dropped, where it will tell no tales.

If the ferrule tapers fairly, and has a small slit upon each side, it will fit almost any stick, and thus the effect of the trick may be heightened by using a borrowed stick. If an unsuitable stick is offered, it can easily be rejected as being too long, or too short, or too heavy, or too light, and another one borrowed in its stead. It is always well, though, to have a stick of your own, so that you may use it, if the proper kind cannot be secured from the audience.

This is a trick that demands careful practice before-

hand. All the paraphernalia must be thoroughly tested and approved, for if the thread is too long, the card will dangle some inches from the top of the stick; and if the thread is too short, and is broken by the slash, the card will fall to the ground with the others, in both cases, spoiling the performance in a very lamentable manner. Therefore, the right length of thread, the right sort of stick, and the proper sweep to give in the slash, should all be ascertained with exactitude before the amateur essays to perform it in public.

If desired, the performer may first of all "vanish" the desired card by placing it in the card-box (Fig. 20), which is a small box, the size of a playing card,

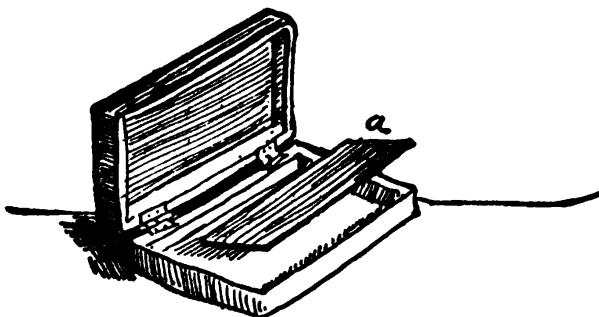


FIG. 20

painted black inside, and provided with a loose "flap," also black. The card being placed in the box, the lid (containing the flap) is closed, and the lid falls over the card, effectually concealing it. The box may now be shown apparently empty. This little box may be used in a number of different ways, and is a useful piece of apparatus.

A CARD CAUGHT ON THE CORNER OF A BORROWED HANDKERCHIEF

The above trick is a variation of a much older feat of catching a chosen card on a sword, and is to be recommended, inasmuch as no special apparatus is necessary.

A card is selected, not forced, replaced, and the pack shuffled and held by a spectator.

The performer now requests the loan of a gentleman's handkerchief, which he shows to be an ordinary one. The gentleman holding the pack is now requested to throw it in the air, and, as the cards descend, the performer waves the handkerchief amongst them, whereupon the chosen card is seen to be caught upon its corner,—both being immediately passed for inspection.

The following is the explanation of this effective little trick:



FIG. 21

On the top vest button the performer has a small portion of soft, adhesive wax. When the chosen card is returned, it is placed on the top of the pack by the performer, and the pack immediately handed back to the chooser to be shuffled. While placing the card on the top of the pack, the performer quickly withdraws it, the chosen card being retained in the hand, and palmed. While the shuffling of the pack is going on, the performer removes the wax, and sticks it to one corner of the palmed card. A handkerchief is borrowed and held by two diagonal corners, the back of the hands only being shown to the audience. The corner of the handkerchief is now pressed to the wax on the card. (Fig. 21). The cards are then thrown, and the performer, holding the two corners of the handkerchief

between separate fingers, waves it among the falling cards, and with a quick flap, releases the palmed card, the handkerchief shoots out, the card becomes visible, attached to its corner, and the effect is that the performer has actually caught one of the falling shower of cards. (Fig. 22.)

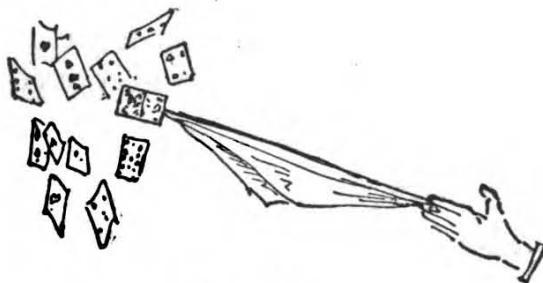


FIG. 22

THE VELVET CLOTH

A velvet cloth, for the production of cards, etc., is often very useful. It is made by having two pieces of velvet of the same size, sewn together,—once straight across the centre. The flap thus formed by the one piece is now doubled over, so as to make both the sides of the flap of the same appearance as the back piece of velvet (velvet having no right and wrong side). (See Fig. 23.) The flap may thus be made to cover either the

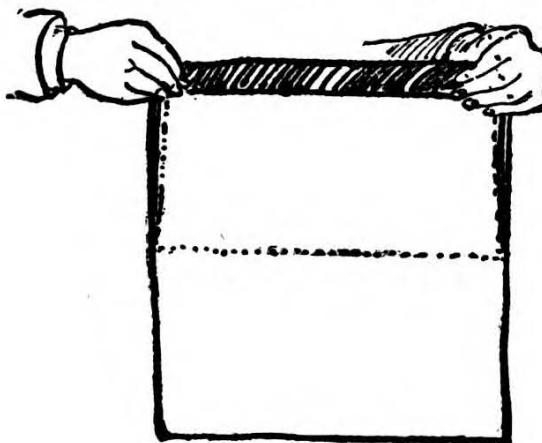


FIG. 23

one or the other half of the back, without the change being visible at a short distance.

For use in a trick, three cards may be affixed, as in Figure 24, and the flap held upwards by an assistant so as to cover them. The performer then proceeds to force three cards,—duplicates of those fastened to the velvet. When the cards have been drawn, he crumples and tears them up and loads them in a pistol. The assistant then holds up the piece of velvet as a target;

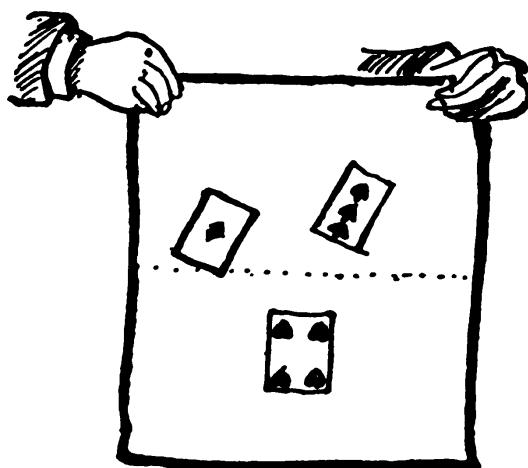


FIG. 24

the performer fires, the assistant drops the flap, and the three cards appear, as though in truth affixed there by the shot. When the shot is fired the assistant steps back a step, as though startled by the report, at the same time lowering and raising the cloth some six inches. Under cover of these movements the flap may be dropped with impunity. The edge of the flap should be slightly weighted, that it may fall more quickly, and remain in a straight position when it has fallen.

In the same way the cloth may be used for the production of watches, rings, or other borrowed articles,—as well as cards.

THE RING AND CARD TRICK

The Ring and the Card is a comparatively new trick, and therefore more than less desirable.

A card is selected by the audience, and given to the performer, who punches three holes in it, two upon the top, and one upon the bottom. (See Fig. 25.) Into those at the top, he strings a piece of cord or ribbon, and ties either end to chairs placed about four feet apart. Thus the card is hanging with its face to the

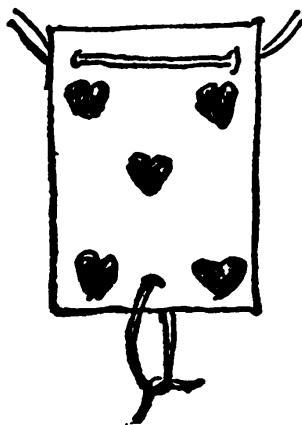


FIG. 25

company. Into the third hole he strings another short piece of ribbon, say, about six inches long, and ties the ends together, making a loop, that also hangs down.

A wedding ring is next borrowed, and the performer, being duly impressed with his responsibility, in having such a valuable article entrusted into his care, places it in a box, and locks the box. Both are then placed upon a stand at some distance from the card. The performer then advances toward the box, and, holding his wand at arm's length, he taps the box gently with it. Whirling quickly he also taps the card, and the ring is seen to appear, dangling in the hanging, free loop.

Now, though it seems an impossibility for a company of people,—each, presumably, gifted with sound sight,

and excellent vision,—to be so deceived, nevertheless, the performer did not place the borrowed ring into the box, but palmed it instead. When the card was adjusted, and the upper string strung through it, a dummy wedding ring, one side of which had been well waxed, or smeared with dry soap, was stuck to the back of the card, directly over the lower hole. Thus when the loop was threaded into the hole, it passed through the ring too, and a very light tap with the wand was all that was needed to release it and cause it to fall down and become visible, dangling on the loop. In the act of untying the knot, the genuine ring is substituted for the dummy, and is returned and identified by its owner.

Another method of substitution is to thread the ring onto the wand, and offer it thus to the owner. The duplicate ring is threaded onto one end of the wand, the real one is held palmed in the hand, which is holding the wand. It can thus, while still in the palm, be placed encircling the tip held in the hand, and if the wand be transferred to the other hand, the real ring is presented, and the duplicate palmed.

A better method of having the ring appear is to have a black silk thread attached to it, and held in the hand of an assistant behind the scenes. The magician in this case, does not even approach the card to tap it, but simply makes a few passes with his hands, fires off a pistol, or goes through some other ceremony, and the ring, at the critical moment, appears.

Space prevents the description of additional "card tricks," the number of which is almost unlimited. For further tricks of this character, the reader is referred to Professor Hoffmann's "Card Tricks," and to other books upon the subject, now upon the market.

CHAPTER III

COIN TRICKS

The Principal Sleights Used in Coin Tricks

Palming.—The first and most important of the various “sleights” used in coin tricks is that of palming—the art of holding a coin, ball, or other small object in the palm of the hand, while the fingers and thumb are free to be used, and the hand has a perfectly normal appearance.

The coin is simply held by the contraction of the fleshy part of the palm, and is effected as follows: Place a coin, say a twenty-five cent piece, in the exact centre of the palm of the hand; then push it toward the base of the thumb for about half an inch. It will be found

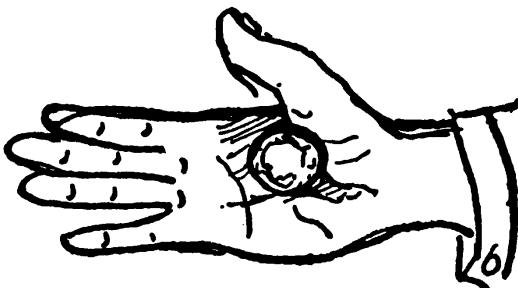


FIG. 26

that as the thumb is contracted, as it were, at its base, the coin will be retained, and the hand may be turned in any direction and held in any position with impunity. (See Fig. 26.) The exact spot on which to place the coin must be discovered by experience, as it varies a little with every performer; but, being found, the conjuror should practise unceasingly, until he can move the fingers about, pick up objects,—in fact, until he can use his hand almost as freely with the coin palmed as with-

out it. Practically every coin trick depends upon this ability to palm, and therefore considerable attention should be given to becoming expert in this sleight with both hands. Care should be taken, in all coin tricks of this character, to keep the palm always turned away from the audience,—but this of course, goes without saying.

Having learned the art of keeping a coin in the palm, the next thing is to learn how to get it there without effort; and for this purpose various "passes" have been devised. The object of all passes is the same



FIG. 27

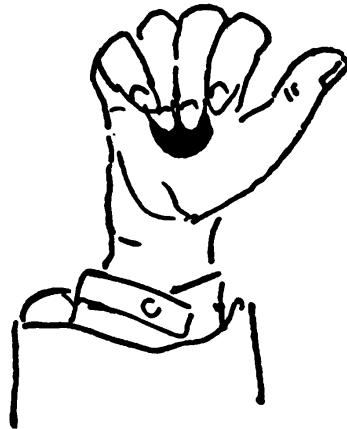


FIG. 28

—to disguise the fact that an apparently transferred article has been retained in the original hand. There are many passes in existence, but the following are the principal ones.

First, the would-be magician must learn to place the coin in position, ready to be palmed by but a slight movement of the fingers. The method of doing this is as follows:

Take the coin to be palmed between the thumb, the first and second fingers, as shown in Figure 27.

The coin should rest almost entirely on the fingers, being only steadied by the thumb. Now move the thumb away,—and close the two fingers, with the coin balanced on them, into the palm of the hand. (See Fig. 28.)

It will be found that, if the coin were placed correctly in the first instance, it will rest in the exact position in the palm necessary for palming, and the coin may be gripped by the thumb muscle, the fingers be released and straightened, and the coin retained, all by one swift motion,—as much depends upon the quickness and smoothness of the action.

THE THUMB PALM

This, while one of the most useful and important of all “palms” is also one of the easiest to perform.

Take a coin between the thumb and first and second fingers of either hand (it would be well to master this palm with both hands) and, with these fingers, slide the coin along the thumb until it reaches the base of the thumb, where the coin is gripped. This is frequently covered by the motion of throwing the coin (apparently) from the right to the left hand. (See Figs. 29, 30, 31.)

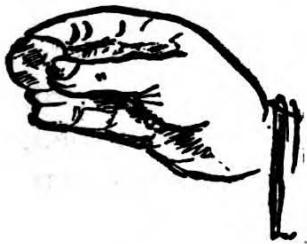


FIG. 29

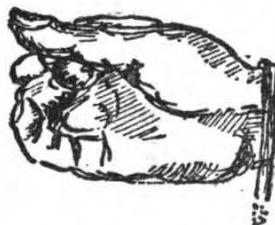


FIG. 30

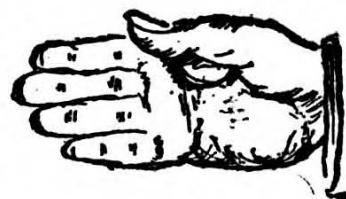


FIG. 31

Passes.—All this may be done under cover of a motion of the hands, in which the coin is apparently transferred from the right hand to the left,—which is the principal and most important pass in use in conjuring. To effect this, take the coin in the fingers of the right hand, in the manner already described, and approach the left, the fingers of which are extended as though to

grasp the money. When the two hands meet, the coin should be palmed in the right hand, and the left hand closes, as though the money were in its possession. In the meantime, the right, holding the coin, drops carelessly by the side. Hold up the closed left hand, as though it contained the coin, and let the eyes follow it all the time,—until it is desired to show that the left hand is really empty, the coin having disappeared in a most inexplicable manner. All this requires neatness and dispatch, and this can only be acquired by long practice, and patient effort.

One that can scarcely be called a "pass" is this: Have the article to be palmed in position, so that the actual palming may be done by simply contracting the muscles. The left hand is now advanced, as if to cover the right, and the left-hand fingers seem to pick up the coin, with the hand slightly turned over,—so as to conceal the working, or rather lack of working of the trick. The left hand is then moved away, closed, as in the above described pass.

The *Tourniquet*, or "The French Drop," is totally different from those above explained, and though the most ancient of coin passes is included mostly for the sake of completeness, and therefore is extremely useful,—especially if more than one coin is to be vanished. Thus you are enabled to make a number of coins disappear, without using the same sleight twice.

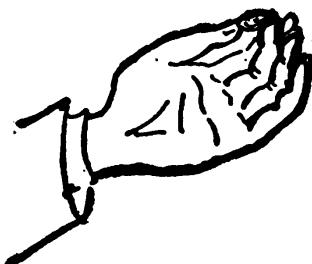


FIG. 32

Hold the coin between the thumb and second finger of the left hand, as shown in Fig. 32.

Now move the right hand toward the left, passing thumb of the right hand under, and the fingers over the coin, closing them as they pass it; and, while the eyes of the spectators testify that the fingers have seized the coin, in reality it is dropped quickly into the palm of the left. (Fig. 33.)

The right hand, after it leaves the left, should be carried upwards and forwards, all the time following it with the eyes, and thus carrying the attention of the



FIG. 33

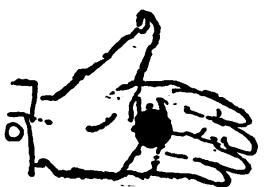


FIG. 34

audience with the right hand. Do not be in too great a hurry to drop the coin from the left hand, but turn the palm slightly towards you, with the fingers a little bent, and after a moment's pause, let it fall gently to your side. The hollow made by the bent fingers will be sufficient to hold the coin. (Fig. 34.)

The amateur conjuror should note that the coin is never vanished when the conjuror says that it is, but always *before*,—and therein lies one of the most important secrets of conjuring. Thus, in the oft used, “One, two, three!”, though the emphasis is on the “three” the change is effected more frequently at the “one,” and never after the “two.”

The foregoing passes are arranged for the occasions

when the performer simply wants the coins to disappear. There is another class of passes which shows how to *exchange* one coin for another,—which is a very useful sleight to know, as I shall endeavour to demonstrate.

METHODS OF EXCHANGE

Suppose, for instance, you want to exchange a marked coin for one that is not marked. Proceed as follows:

Have a substitute palmed in the left hand. Take the marked coin in your right hand (Fig. 35), and, while pretending to take it with the left hand, palm it with

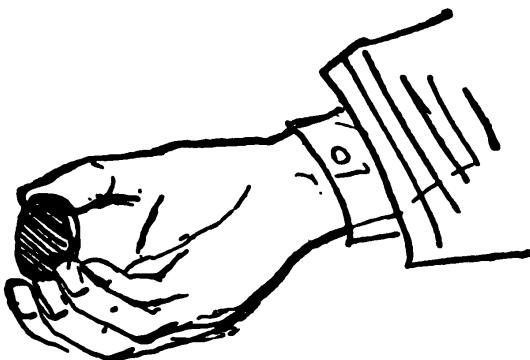


FIG. 35

your right, and at the same instant let the duplicate coin drop to the finger tips of the left hand, and exhibit that. The impression gained by the audience is that you are now looking at the marked coin, which is safely palmed in the right hand. This pass, of course, may be worked with either hand holding the substitute.

Now, some information about what are called “flourishes,”—which are not really tricks in themselves, but which serve as an interlude between tricks, and afford a great deal of pleasure and amusement.

While pretending to pass the coin from the right hand to the left, stop and pretend that you hear some one say that you are using your sleeve, as a hiding-

place. Elaborately deny this, and with great indignation offer to roll up both sleeves. With your right hand take hold of your left coat sleeve, and pull it up a few inches, when you will find that the palm of your right hand is brought immediately over the opening of the outside breast pocket of the coat,—if you are wearing such a coat. As soon as this is the case, relax the contraction of the thumb muscle, and allow the coin to drop quietly into the pocket—all this being done apparently in the mere act of pulling up the sleeve a trifle. Now command the coin to disappear,—it being supposedly still in the left hand, which is kept closed,—and show that it has obeyed you. The audience may now accuse you of having the coin in the right hand, and you may exhibit the right hand. Thus you have a flourish which is almost an entire trick in itself.

THE HOOKED COIN

This little piece of apparatus,—while not a trick in itself,—will be found useful in many ways, and in performing various sleights. It consists merely in a single coin—such as a half-dollar—near one edge of which has been soldered a small, fine hook. The result is that the coin can be hooked on to the coat sleeve, etc., and will remain there, securely fixed in place until again detached.

Thus, the coin may be hooked into the bend of the arm, when rolling up the sleeves; or the coin may be palmed in the right hand, when apparently transferred to the left, and the magician, taking hold of the left arm of his assistant, may hook the coin onto the back of his sleeve, where it will remain suspended. The hands may now be shown empty, and the coin reproduced from the assistant's arm,—much to his amazement. The ingenious performer will doubtless find many methods of utilizing this little coin, which will be found useful in a variety of ways.

THE SPINNING COIN

The effect of this little trick is as follows: The performer calls attention to the peculiar properties exhibited by spinning bodies, at the same time offering to demonstrate their peculiarities to those present. He spins a coin on the table (on its edge), and a moment later covers it with his right hand. He also places his left hand on the table, at some distance from the right hand. A moment later, he lifts both hands, when it will be found that the coin has vanished from under the right hand, and is now under the left.

This trick is one of the very few in which "the quickness of the hand" *does*, indeed, "deceive the eye." For, in the act of placing the right hand over the spinning coin, the performer gives it a quick sideways "slap," at the same time placing his right hand flat on the table. The left hand, lifted up partly from the table, some little distance away, is waiting for the coin, which by this means is sent skating across the table, and under the left hand. Upon the ease and rapidity with which this move is accomplished will depend the deception. Needless to say, this cannot be performed on a table covered with a table-cloth; and a highly polished wooden or glass surface is the best for accomplishing this trick.

At the conclusion, both hands are lifted up, and the coin shown under the left hand, while the right hand is shown empty.

Another version of this trick, also known as "the spinning coin"—though completely different in principle, is the following: A coin being spun on the table, the conjuror calls out whether it is going to fall heads or tails up.

Borrow a coin, say, a fifty-cent piece, and allow any one to spin it on the table,—from which the cloth has been removed. While the preparations have been going

on, you quietly exchange the borrowed coin for one of your own, upon which you have cut a small notch on the extreme edge,—say, upon the tail side. Now, if the coin be spun on the bare boards of the table, and the coin falls with the notched side upwards, the sound of the last revolutions before it falls will be a continuous whirr. If, on the contrary, it falls with the notched side downward, the sound will be slightly irregular to your trained ear, and the spinning will not last quite so long. And so, though you be blindfolded, or led to a distant corner of the room, provided you can hear the sound distinctly, you can immediately call out, when it falls, which side is up. It must be borne in mind that the side which will fall uppermost is the exact opposite of the one you hear spinning. Be sure that the audience does not notice that you are listening, or they may do the same; but the sound is so slightly altered that only a very acute ear will hear it, if they do not suspect.

THE WARM COIN

A dozen coins are passed around among the company, and one of them is chosen. Then the chosen one is passed around, so that every one may see it. This being done, the one chosen, together with the other eleven are emptied into a borrowed hat, and well shaken up, and the performer, who may be blindfolded, puts his hand into the hat and withdraws the selected coin. This is performed as follows: In being handled by the audience, the coin gains a certain warmth, and the other eleven remain cold, which can be easily detected by the performer, if his hands are at all sensitive. It must be remembered that the coins are passed around in the first place on a *coin plate*, and not until one is chosen, are any of them handled,—and then only the one to be withdrawn.

THE HEADS AND TAILS TRICK

This little sleight is, so far as I am aware, original with myself.

The performer borrows a coin, and "flicks" it into the air, as he normally would, for causing it to come down "heads or tails." It is caught by the right hand, and placed upon the back of the (closed) left hand, outstretched for the purpose. The right hand is removed, showing the coin.

The performer does this once or twice, saying meanwhile: "Now, if any one guesses correctly *this* time, they can have the coin!" The same action is apparently gone through; when a cry of "heads!" (let us say) is made. The performer then removes his right hand, when the coin will be found to have vanished altogether!

The explanation lies in the fact that the magician, after two or three preliminary tosses into the air, as his right hand dips downward for the final "flip," drops the coin into the left hand, waiting to receive it. The right hand is then closed, brought upward, with the eyes following it, retained in the air for a moment, then placed, opened, onto the back of the left hand. On the right hand being removed, the coin is seen to have vanished, and can afterwards be shown, if desired, in the left hand.

Thus described, the trick may appear too simple and obvious to prove effective, but it is nevertheless one of the most effective sleights in existence, when well done, and will prove baffling even to your magical friends, when shown for the first time.

THE TRAVELLING COINS

"You all know that money talks," says the smiling wizard; "Now I'll show you how money walks!" So saying, he exhibits eight half-dollars, four of which he

places in his right hand, and the other four in his left.

"Now watch—presto, pass!"

No sooner said than done. The conjuror opens his right hand, and drops, not *four* coins, but *five*; and simultaneously, doing the same with his left hand, reveals not *four*, but *three*.

This process is repeated three times—each time one more coin is found in the right hand, and one less in the left, until all four coins have travelled into the right hand.

Now this trick depends not so much upon the manipulative ability of the conjuror as upon his address. To perform this surprising feat, you must first have palmed in your left hand a fifty-cent piece—making nine, all told. (Of course once the presence of this extra coin is suspected, the trick would be ruined.) Now, with the left hand, drop the four coins into the right, one at a time, counting as you do so, "One—two—three." At the word *three*, release the palmed coin with the third coin, so that it drops into the right hand. Then follow that with the fourth. Now it will be seen that the right hand holds five coins. Great care must be taken to do this in as natural a manner as possible. A little practice will be required to drop the two coins from the left hand into the right, so that they will "clink" as one. Of course, each time a coin enters the right hand, the fingers must be closed, and opened again to receive the next coin, otherwise the presence of the extra coin would be detected.

Now, when, with the left hand, you pick up the four coins, *one at a time*, from the table, counting out loud for each coin, you *palm* the first coin, so that when you drop the five from the right hand, you drop but *three* from the left; the fourth one, as before explained, being palmed. Now, with the left hand, pick up the five other coins, and drop them singly as before into the right hand, counting out loud as you do so, and, with

the fourth coin, drop the one palmed; then follow it with the fifth. To all appearances, you have dropped into your right hand *six* coins, but in reality it now contains *seven*.

Now, again, with the left hand, pick up the three coins singly, and palm, as before, the first. Of course this must be done naturally. I would advise doing this a few times *without* palming, and see just what would be the natural way for you to pick them up; then practise palming the first coin.

Repeat this process until all four coins have apparently travelled from the left to the right hand. At the conclusion of the trick, you will find that you still have one palmed coin (the ninth) in the left hand. A most excellent way to get rid of this coin is to pick up the entire eight coins with the left hand, and let them fall in a shower on the table or into your right hand,—assuring the audience that “there is nothing fastened to the coins,” and that really there has “been no deception!” You may be sure that no one will notice the extra coin.

The entire success of this capital trick depends upon the naturalness of the picking-up and counting of the coins.

THE FIFTY CENTS AND ORANGE TRICK

The following trick will be found to be extremely effective, and is one which I have frequently performed with good effect:

The magician exhibits a small glass, and a pitcher of water. He then asks for the loan of a fifty-cent piece (which may be marked) a handkerchief, and a volunteer from the audience to assist him in the trick. The services of the volunteer having been procured, he is seated in a chair, and given the glass to hold. The performer fills the glass with water, asking his assistant to taste it to see that it is in no way chemically pre-

pared. The conjuror then asks his assistant to hold the marked fifty-cent piece under the handkerchief, and over the glass of water. Going to one side of the stage, the performer brings forward two oranges upon a plate, and allows the audience to choose one of them. He then counts "one, two, three!" and at the word "three" the assistant is asked to drop the coin he is holding into the water. Complete silence prevailing, the coin may be *heard* striking the water and the glass on its downward descent. The performer calls attention to this, and says that he will not again approach the glass, but will, nevertheless, cause the marked coin to disappear from the tumbler, and reappear in the chosen orange. A pistol is discharged, the handkerchief is withdrawn from the glass, and the fifty-cent piece is found to have vanished. The water may be poured out, and the tumbler shown empty. On cutting open the orange, the marked coin is found in its centre.

The chief secret consists in the use of an ingenious piece of apparatus, of which the audience knows nothing. This is a small disc of glass, the exact size of a fifty-cent piece. In placing the coin under the handkerchief, the performer substitutes it for the glass disc, which he had previously palmed. It is this disc which the volunteer holds, and which he drops into the glass of water. Being glass, it is naturally invisible when the handkerchief is removed; and, the tumbler being the exact size (at its base) of a fifty-cent piece, and slightly curved, the water may be poured out and the glass inverted at the conclusion of the trick, without danger of this disc falling out or becoming invisible.

The remainder of the trick is simple. Having possession of the marked fifty-cent piece, the performer introduces it into the centre of one of the oranges, which has been previously slit open, and advances, asking his audience which orange is preferred. The old

dodge is resorted to of forcing the choice, so that, no matter which orange is selected, the prepared orange is ultimately left for the performance of the trick. All the magician has to do, therefore, is to cut open the orange *on the side opposite* the slit, break it apart, and the marked coin will be found in its interior.

A far superior method of loading the coin into the orange, however, is the following. *Any* orange may be chosen, and is entirely free from preparation, and may be examined by the audience. Only one orange may be used, if desired, and the performer never leaves the stage.

In this case, the coin, when palmed in the left hand, is allowed to drop to the finger tips, and the orange, after being examined, is also picked up in the left hand —thus concealing the coin behind it. Cutting the fruit with the right hand, the performer cuts the orange in halves, turning it round and round, in his hand, as he does so. As the portion first cut is brought to the back, the fingers work the coin into the slit thus formed, —pushing the coin well home, as the cutting at the front continues. The result is that, when the cutting is complete, and the two halves of the orange are separated, there is the half-dollar in the centre of the examined orange! This makes a very effective finish to the trick.

TO RUB ONE DIME INTO THREE

Procure, if it be possible, three dimes of the same date, and approximately in the same state of wear. Stick two of these to the under side of the table by means of wax,—about half an inch from the edge. The coins must be several inches apart. Then, turn up your sleeves, take the third dime in the right hand, and draw particular attention to its date and general appearance, and, indirectly to the fact that you have no other coin concealed in your hands. Turn back the table cover, and rub the dime backwards and forwards

on the edge of the table. In this position, rubbing with the thumb, the fingers will be brought underneath the table edge, and consequently will be in a position to touch the other dimes. After rubbing a few seconds, pull away your hand with a quick jerk, carrying away with it one of the concealed dimes, which you exhibit as having been produced by friction. Pocketing the waxed dime, repeat the operation with the remaining dime.

TO MULTIPLY ONE HALF-DOLLAR INTO TWO (NEW METHOD)

This very pretty little illusion is really an optical trick, depending upon the line of vision of your audience for its success. The effect of the trick is that the magician, showing a single half-dollar in his finger tips, and after exhibiting all sides of it (to prove that only one half-dollar is really there) suddenly causes it to become two.

The secret consists in the fact that, while one half-dollar is held in a *vertical* position, another coin is concealed behind it, held by the thumb and first finger in a *horizontal* position. By turning the hand about, all sides of the coin may be shown,—the edge of the coin,—etc., thus proving its “singleness.” Care must be taken, however, so to hold the coin that the second (horizontal) coin is concealed by the thumb and first finger of the hand; and if care be taken to study the eye-line of the onlooker, this may be accomplished successfully. After showing all sides in this manner, the performer has merely to “clink” the two coins together and throw them on the table, where they may be examined.

This simple little sleight, well performed, is marvellously effective and practically undetectable.

A NEW COIN VANISH

A coin is shown, held in the right hand, between the thumb and second finger. The left hand is held open,

palm upwards, and the coin is fairly placed in the centre of the palm, and the fingers closed about it. The right hand does not release the coin, nor change its position, until the left hand is slowly turned over and around the coin, which "makes its exit" through the side of the hand near the thumb. The left hand now covers the coin, which, with the aid of the first and second fingers of the right hand, is quickly drawn up to the base of the thumb, where it is "thumb-palmed." The right hand now pulls up the left sleeve, and at the same time drops the coin into the breast pocket of the coat. The coin has now "vanished."

THE COIN AND HAT TRICK

Two borrowed hats are set side by side upon the table, and the performer makes two marked fifty-cent pieces pass invisibly from one to the other, in this manner: Take the two coins in the right hand, and pretend to pass them into the left, palming them in the right. The left hand must now, as heretofore, be kept closed. Pick up one of the hats with the right hand, fingers inside, thumb out,—thus bringing the two coins against the lining of the hat,—and retain them there by the pressure of the fingers. The interior of the hat may now be shown as empty, the hat placed on the table, crown downwards. At the same moment extend the left hand, still closed, and to all appearances containing the coins, over the left hand hat, open your hand, as if releasing them, at the same time dropping the coins concealed in the right hand into the hat held in the right hand. The audience hears the jingle at the moment, and believes that you have dropped them into the other hat. Thus, after a proper interval, and with sufficient ceremony, you announce that you have caused them to change, and exhibit the two coins from the supposedly empty hat. They are as a rule thoroughly impressed.

THE FLYING COINS

The performer counts out twelve coins on his table, and asks some one in the company to act as his assistant. The assistant having been found, the performer gives him four coins to hold, and cautions him to hold them tightly. The performer himself then takes eight coins, and, holding them above his head, commands four of the coins he is holding to appear in the hands of the volunteer. Upon examination this is found to have happened, for the performer holds only four coins, and the assistant is tightly grasping eight. Next, the assistant is given eight to hold, the performer taking the remaining four. Upon "presto, change!" being pronounced, the volunteer finds to his amazement that the performer's hands are empty, and he, the volunteer, holds the entire dozen!

To effect this, the performer must be provided with sixteen coins, just alike. Four of these the performer has palmed in his right hand at the commencement of the trick, and, after elaborately counting out the four which the assistant is to hold, he takes them all in his right hand, adding at the same time the four coins originally palmed, thereby making eight. He now picks up the remaining eight coins from the table, and apparently transfers them from the right hand into the left, but in reality transfers four only. The mystic "pass" is then pronounced, and the first part of the trick is done. The second part is but a repetition of the first; you secretly add four palmed coins to the eight which you pretend to hand to the assistant, telling him at the same time to make doubly sure, this time, and so engage his attention until his hands are closed. In transferring the coins from the right hand to the left, the "pass" is used, the left hand being drawn away closed, while the coins remain in the right. The incantation is pronounced, the performer's hand is shown

empty, and the assistant finds he has the whole twelve coins in his possession.

TRAVELLING COINS: SECOND METHOD

This little trick is an excellent example of the "psychology of misdirection,"—and forms a fitting conclusion to the above trick. Explaining that he will repeat this last experiment, more slowly, in order that the audience may understand exactly how it is done (old joke) the conjuror takes two half-dollars, holding

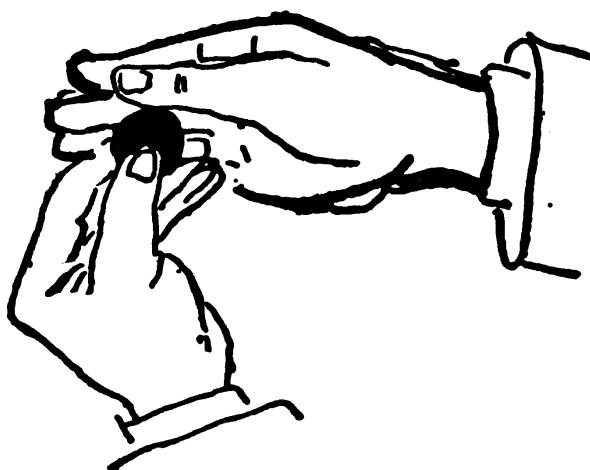


FIG. 36

one in each hand. With his right hand, he takes the coin held in that hand and places it between his teeth. He now throws the one in his left hand into his right, and lets the one held between his teeth drop into the palm of his left hand.

Again, he places the right hand coin between his teeth, throws the coin in his left hand into his right, etc., as before.

Once more, the right hand places the coin between the teeth, but instead of throwing, as before, the coin held in the left hand into the right, it is simply "palmed," and the performer goes through the move-

ment of throwing it into the right hand, which is immediately closed. (Fig. 36.)

Now, instead of again dropping the coin held between the teeth into the left hand, that hand reaches up to the mouth and removes the coin. Both hands should now be closed, with the backs up.

The performer now explains that he will cause the coin to pass invisibly from his right into his left hand,—and, no sooner said than done,—a very audible “clink” is heard, and at the same time the right hand is shown empty. Only very little practice will be required to drop the palmed coin onto the one held in the fingers, to cause the “clink” above described.

THE COIN AND CARD TRICK

The following is a combination coin and card trick. Two cards are drawn from the pack, and the performer places a borrowed dime under one of them. The coin is soon found to have made its way under the other card. The performer then announces he will cause the coin to appear under either card, as the spectators choose, and this may be repeated as often as desired,—the performer showing his hands empty every time he turns up a card.

The secret is this: Have two dimes of your own, each having a little wax on one side. One of these is palmed, the other placed on the *servante*. Any two cards may be selected. Next borrow a dime, and exchange it for the waxed one you have palmed; and, picking up one of the cards, secretly press one of the waxed coins against it, on the under side,—thus causing the coin to adhere to the card. Place this card on the table,—at the same time let the left hand, containing the borrowed coin, drop carelessly behind the table, and exchange the borrowed coin for the other waxed one on the *servante*. You at once exhibit the coin, place it waxed side up on the table, and place the other card over it, pressing

down slightly in the middle, over the waxed dime. You may then cause the dime to appear under either card you choose, remembering that if you do not want it to adhere, you may bend the card slightly in turning it up from the table. The dime must of course be re-changed for the borrowed one, before returning it, as it would never do to give back a coin having a coating of wax over one side of it!

THE PAPER FOLD AND DISAPPEARING COIN

This impromptu little trick will often cause much wonderment. A piece of paper, about six or eight inches square, is shown free from preparation. A fifty-cent piece is placed in the middle of it, and one side of the paper folded down, so as to cover it. The coin may now be *felt* in the paper. One side of the paper is now folded down; then the other side—the audience feeling the coin in the paper each time. The fourth side is finally folded over, when, lo and behold! the coin is found to have disappeared, and is now no longer in the paper which is promptly torn up! It may be produced from a gentleman's pocket, or wherever desired.

The secret of this trick consists in the folding of the paper. If the reader will experiment, he will see that the first three folds are genuine, and really serve to enclose the coin. Now, as the fourth side is folded down, so as to contain the coin, the paper is tilted up, and the coin allowed to fall into the lower space. It will now be found that the coin, instead of being actually folded into the paper, is contained in a sort of loose pocket; and, if the paper be tilted up, the coin will slide out, into the palm of the hand,—where it can be palmed, and reproduced as the performer sees fit. The folded paper is immediately torn up to prevent inspection, which would reveal the secret at once.

CATCHING COINS IN A WINE GLASS

This is a new variety of "Picking coins from the air" trick, and is performed with the aid of an ordinary large-sized, long-stemmed claret glass, which can be freely passed for scrutiny and examination. Thus, the performer walks round the room, or stage, holding this glass out at arm's length from him, and the other hand down at his side, and the audience both hear and see coins, coming apparently from the thin air, fall into it. The explanation is very simple. The performer shows his right hand to be empty, and with his left picks up the claret glass, showing it to be an ordinary glass, without guile! While doing this, he lets his right hand drop to his *servante*, and picks up a stack of coins, which he had previously placed there. He palms them, and when he has finished showing the glass with his left hand, he passes it to his right. The middle finger of the right hand then grips the stem of the glass, and the coins are palmed in such a way that they rest upon the third joint of the third finger,—the knuckle of which rests upon the stand of the glass. (Fig. 37.)

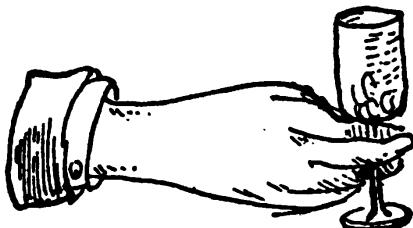


FIG. 37

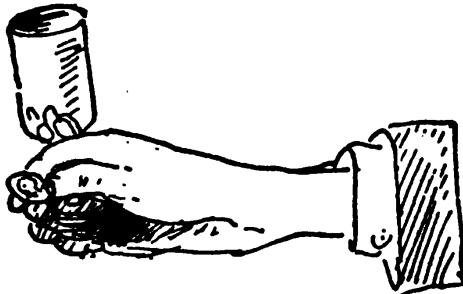


FIG. 38

The top coin of the stack is then manipulated so that it rests on the side of the middle joint of the first finger, when the thumb nail is pushed under it, flipping it up in the air, high enough to enable one to catch it in the glass. (See Fig. 38.) This trick is particularly adapted to a small room.

The winged coin is also one of the tricks invented by Mr. Downs, which he described as follows:

"The effect of this splendid piece of magic is as if you had passed a marked half-dollar from a distance into an uncorked bottle, whose neck was so small that the bottle had to be broken to get the coin out. In appearance it is as follows: Any gentleman is invited to assist you, and is seated in a chair in the centre of the stage, facing the audience. You take an empty soda water bottle (one of the round-end variety) and, standing it upright upon the volunteer's head, you ask him to steady it with his hands so that it does not fall. Now you borrow any half-dollar, and have it marked by the owner. Taking it in your right hand, you, in full view of your audience, make a motion as if throwing it toward the bottle. The sound of a falling coin is heard, and upon your bidding the gentleman to take down the bottle and shake it, a half-dollar is seen to be within. Take the bottle down among the audience, and it is then seen that the mouth of the bottle is smaller than the coin. You now step up to your table, and, taking a hammer, break the bottle over a small box, and picking up the bottom of the bottle, you pass it, still containing the coin, to the owner, who identifies his coin.

The secret is this: You have two bottles, one of which is prepared in this manner: The round bottom is sawed off, and a half-dollar placed in it, and the bottom cemented on again. On the back of the chair (which has

a solid back), is fastened a little wire bottle rack, in which the prepared bottle is placed beforehand. Beside this little rack is a cloth bag, and as you step up behind the seated subject to place the bottle upon his head, you rapidly drop the bottle into the bag, and with the same motion bring up to view the prepared bottle, which you place upon his head, with the request that he hold it. As the bottom is round the coin cannot be seen from a distance, and the same reason also necessitates his holding onto it, else it would tumble over. After vanishing the coin by palming, you request him to shake the bottle, which he does, and the coin is seen to be in it. It is then shown that the neck is too small to admit the half-dollar, after which you hold it over a box containing sawdust, and break it. You then pick up the bottom, and at the same time substitute the marked coin for the one that was first in it, and pass bottom and coin to the owner."

THE MAGIC COIN TRAY

The following is an excellent little trick, when well performed, as I know from personal experience. The performer brings forward a small tin tray about four by six inches square, upon which rest twelve pennies. The performer asks some one in the company to step upon the stage and assist him in this trick. A volunteer having been procured, the performer seats him in a convenient chair, and asks him to remove the coins from the tray, and then count them one by one, so that the audience can see exactly how many coins there are. Twelve coins are counted. The performer then asks his assistant to remove four of the coins, and give them to him (the performer). Eight coins then remain upon the tray. The assistant is asked to place his two hands together in the form of a cup, and into this cup the performer pours the eight coins, remaining on the tray. The assistant is then asked to close his hands tightly, so that it would

be impossible for the magician either to abstract, or to add to any of the coins in his hands. The remaining four pennies are seen to be in the performer's left hand.

An empty glass is now shown, and may be examined. It is then placed upon the performer's table. Taking the four coins in his right hand, the performer drops them into the glass, and they may be distinctly *heard* by the audience as they fall into the tumbler. The performer instantly seizes the glass in his two hands, holding the mouth in one palm, and the base of the glass in the other, and rapidly advances toward his assistant. Reaching him, the performer pronounces the mystic words "One, two, three! Pass!" and the glass is *instantly* shown empty. The coins have vanished, and are no longer in the glass, or in the performer's hands. The volunteer is then requested to count out onto the tray the number of coins in his hands, and upon his counting them separately, it is found that he has twelve coins, the original number. Such is the effect of the trick on an audience. Now for the explanation.

Sixteen coins are used for the performance of this trick. At the outset twelve of these rest upon the surface of the tray, which is of special construction. The remaining four are hidden in a groove which runs along the under side of the tray between the top and bottom, so that they are invisible, no matter which side of the tray be seen. Four coins are removed, and when the assistant volunteer's hands are held together, and the plate tipped up so as to allow the eight coins resting upon its surface to run into the assistant's hands, the four coins under the tray also pass into his hands,—so that he is holding twelve coins from the outset. (Fig. 39.) He cannot detect this, however, since, owing to the large number of coins, he cannot tell exactly *how many* coins he is holding. The mystery of the first part of the trick is thus explained.

Now for the magical disappearance from the per-

former's hands. Taking the four pennies in the finger tips of his left hand, he approaches the right hand towards them, and by means of the *tourniquet* pretends to take them in the right hand,—in reality leaving them in the palm of the left. The right hand is immediately closed, and moved away from the left hand,—the eyes of the performer following it, as though it really contained the four coins. The closed right hand approaches the glass on the table, assumes a position immediately over it, extends the fingers, and makes the motion of dropping the coins into the glass.

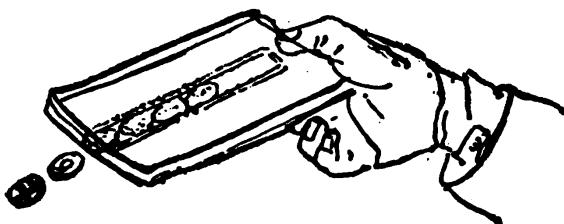


FIG. 39

The illusion of the *sound* is caused in this manner. The performer has a second tumbler on his *servante*, and into this he drops the four coins from his left hand, which he has allowed to drop idly behind the table, while looking at the outstretched right hand. At the moment the fingers of the right hand open, the four coins are dropped from the left hand, into the second glass; and the spectators hearing this, come to the conclusion that the coins are really deposited in the glass on the table. In order that the spectators may not see that no coins are in the visible glass, this should be fluted or cut for two or three inches up from the base, so that, from a little distance, it is impossible to tell whether or no the glass is empty. This, well executed, is a highly effective trick.

CHAPTER IV

TRICKS WITH HANKERCHIEFS

CARD and coin tricks have a great advantage, in that the paraphernalia used is to be found in almost every parlour; and there is no need of great skill in order to accomplish many of them. If the program were made up entirely of these, however,—even if they were good,—it would become monotonous. Therefore, the entertainment may be varied by some of the following tricks with handkerchiefs, watches, etc.

To produce a handkerchief from the empty hand may be done in many ways, of which the following is one of the simplest, cleanest, and most effective. The performer rolls up his sleeves, shows his hands back and front, and both are seen to be empty. With a single wave of his hands, a silk handkerchief is seen to appear in them, to the great astonishment of the spectators. This telling feat is performed as follows: To one end of a silk handkerchief fasten a black silk thread, and to the other end of the thread fasten a black pin, bent to an acute angle. Fasten the pin to the outside of the coat, on the left side, near the armpit. Roll up the handkerchief in a small compact ball, and tuck it under your coat, in such a position that it becomes quite invisible, though it comes out at the least pull on the thread, which now hangs down in a loop on the outside of the coat,—but, both being black, is quite invisible. As you walk onto the stage, rolling up your sleeves, showing your hands to be empty on both sides, slip the left hand thumb into the silk loop. Then say “One, two, three!”, take a step forward, and lunge out with

both arms, keeping the hands together. The result of this will be to straighten out the silk thread, and thus pull the handkerchief from its hiding-place and into the performer's hands. The flight is too instantaneous to be visible, if the feat be properly done. Care should, however, be taken to get the thread exactly the proper length, for, if it be too long, the handkerchief will appear dangling in the air; and if too short, is apt to slip through the performer's fingers, and appear dangling near the floor,—either of which, of course, would be disastrous. The right length can only be ascertained by experiment.

Another method is possibly even more effective, and may be used when the handkerchief is too large to be produced in the ordinary way. Have a small black bag, of dull silk, having an opening along one side into which you press the handkerchief to be produced, and draw the draw-string tight. The bag may then be placed in the hollow of the elbow joint, where a very slight bend of the arm will be sufficient to retain it. When the time for producing it comes, you call attention to your hands being empty, and that your sleeves play no part in the trick, at the same time pulling up the sleeves a trifle, by placing the palm on forearm and drawing it up over the elbow joint (left arm last), and in bringing away your hand, palm the bag. You have now simply to bring the hands together, produce the handkerchief, and, while exhibiting the latter in one hand, drop the bag, without being perceived, upon the *servante*.

To exchange a borrowed handkerchief for a substitute is one of the most necessary things to learn in performing handkerchief tricks, and the following are among the simplest modes of effecting it.

Have the substitute handkerchief tucked under your waistcoat, at the left side, so as to be out of sight, but

within easy reach of your hand; and as you "left wheel" with the borrowed handkerchief, tuck it under your waistband on the right side, and at exactly the same moment pull out the substitute with the other hand, and throw it on the table, with an assurance of manner unmistakable. The substitute handkerchief lying in full view, and being of the same general appearance as the borrowed one, you may without exciting any suspicion, use it as you please for the purposes of your trick, and return the genuine one when it becomes necessary.

Another method is as follows: Place the substitute as before, but this time on the right side. Receiving the borrowed handkerchief in your right hand, hold it loosely, hanging down between the second and third fingers. This leaves the thumb and first finger free, and with these you quickly pull down, as you turn to go to your table, the substitute. You thus have both handkerchiefs held openly in the same hand, but the audience knows of only one. Passing behind your table, you let the borrowed handkerchief fall upon the *servante*, and throw the substitute, as before, on the table.

Do not let the seeming simplicity of the above deceive you into thinking they are not effective. It is often by the simplest means that the most astonishing effects are produced.

THE FLYING HANDKERCHIEF

The following is a very good handkerchief trick, and may be employed in a program with very good results. The performer shows a red and a white handkerchief, and two sheets of newspaper. He wraps the red handkerchief in the newspaper, first in one sheet, then in the other, and hands the package to the audience to hold. He then takes the white silk handkerchief, folds it slowly into a compact ball, and it is seen to disappear. On asking the spectator, who is holding the news-

paper package, to undo it, he finds therein the *white* handkerchief, which has just vanished,—no trace of the red one being left!

The first difficulty in the performance of this trick is the vanishing of the handkerchief. This may be done in various ways. Have a piece of short elastic fastened on the waistcoat, just under the armpit. It should reach to the elbow joint when not stretched. On the free end of this elastic have a small hook. Draw the elastic down the arm, and fasten, by placing the hook over the shirt cuff. Take the handkerchief in the hands, and, under cover of various shakes,—used to show that it is “an ordinary silk handkerchief,”—fasten the hook to one corner of the handkerchief. Then roll the handkerchief into a ball between the palms, attach the hook, and when released, it will fly up the sleeve out of sight.

Another method of performing the same sleight is to fasten one end of a thick, black silk thread to a small hook, and in turn fasten the hook to the cuff. The thread is then passed under the coat sleeve, along the left arm, across the shoulder, and down the right arm, inside the sleeve. The thread should be long enough only for it to reach from hand to hand *when both arms are bent*. To vanish the handkerchief roll it into a small ball, fasten it to the hook, and suddenly straighten both arms with a jerk. The handkerchief will be drawn up the left sleeve and out of the sight of the audience, instantaneously.

The foregoing methods, it will be noticed, are both effected by use of the sleeve,—which is always to be avoided when possible, for the public is suspicious of sleeves! The following method is one by means of which a handkerchief may be vanished with equal facility *when the sleeves are rolled up*.

Have a piece of elastic fastened to the back of the waistcoat, between the shoulders. When not stretched, this should reach to the waist line. To the free end is

fastened a small hook. Get hold of this, fasten the handkerchief as before. Roll the handkerchief in a ball, lunge forward, let go, and the handkerchief will fly underneath the coat, and be hidden by the coat tails.

A fourth method, and a very good one, is to have a small black cloth bag, run with a draw-string to close the mouth. It should be about an inch square, and should be lying on the table, underneath the handkerchief as you have thrown it down, and therefore hidden by it. When you pick up the handkerchief, pick up the bag with it. Under cover of the hands, when rolling the handkerchief into a ball, work the handkerchief into the bag, and when completely in, pull the string tight. When the draw-string is pulled up tight, it closes the bag; and there should be about an inch and a half of slack thread for you to work on. Slip your left thumb through the loop thus made, and swing the bag round to the back of the hand,—all, be it observed, under cover of the right hand. When the palms of the hands are disclosed to the audience, they will be found to be empty, the little bag being behind the left hand, with only the silk thread around the thumb to support it, and this will be invisible at a very short distance.

Still another method of vanishing a handkerchief will be found useful in some tricks, and is worked as follows:

Have a small rubber band concealed between the fingers of one hand. Take the handkerchief to be vanished, roll it up into a small compact ball, taking care that all the corners are tucked in, fasten the rubber band around it, and it will be found that this can be easily palmed,—the handkerchief forming a compact body.

There are other ways of vanishing a handkerchief,—but these will do for the average beginner. To go back to the *modus operandi* of our trick. Let us suppose

that the fourth method of vanishing be used. The "properties" necessary for the trick will then be one whole, and two half-sheets of newspaper; two white and one red handkerchief; and a small cloth bag.

Fold one of the white handkerchiefs into one of the half-sheets of newspaper, and place this on the *servante*. Have everything else on the table,—the little bag being hidden by one of the objects there. Begin by allowing red and white handkerchiefs to be examined. When returned, place them in such a position on the table that the white handkerchief lies partially over the little black cloth bag. Show the newspaper, and proceed to wrap up the red handkerchief in the *half sheet*, folding it in exactly the same manner as the package on the *servante* was folded. Next take the package in your right hand, and the whole sheet of newspaper in your left, and draw the latter towards you so that the right hand is concealed for an instant. In that moment, you quickly exchange the packages, and exhibit the one which has been on the *servante*, containing a duplicate white handkerchief, for the original package. Then proceed to wrap this up in the full sheet of newspaper,—calling attention to the fact that you wrap it securely, etc., —and if desired, seal it with wax! This package is then handed to some spectator to hold. You then pick up the white handkerchief from the table, at the same time getting possession of the little black bag, by means of which you vanish the handkerchief, as already described, you show your hands empty. The package is opened and the white handkerchief found within it,—the red one having disappeared.

HANDKERCHIEF PRODUCTION

The trick next to be explained has the following effect: The performer rolls up his sleeves, shows his hands empty, back and front, then waves his hands in the air

and produces a large silk handkerchief or flag. This is effected as follows:

Procure a watch swivel, and a piece of the very finest wire. Make a loop of the wire about two and a half inches long and fasten it to the ring of the watch swivel. Fold up the handkerchief, as small as possible, and to it fasten the watch swivel,—where the folds come together. Place the handkerchief under your waistcoat, and allow the wire loop to project outside. If the wire is fine enough it will be unnoticeable. In waving your hand from one side to the other, catch your left thumb in the loop, and, by a slight pull, the handkerchief falls into your palm. Bring both hands together, produce the handkerchief, which you immediately pass for examination, at the same time making away with the hook, and immediately afterwards showing your hands perfectly empty.

THE CANDLE AND HANDKERCHIEF

The following is one of the more showy tricks, and therefore a good program piece. A silk handkerchief and a candle are passed to the audience for examination, and when every one is satisfied that they are genuine, the performer takes the handkerchief, rolls it into a ball, and it vanishes from his hands, which are shown to be empty. He then goes to the candle and produces the handkerchief from its flame.

To perform this feat, procure two small silk handkerchiefs, exactly alike; and, folding one up neatly, tie it round with a piece of weak cotton. Take an ordinary box of matches, half open it, and place the folded handkerchief in the space left by the box proper, in sliding out. (Fig. 40.) This is placed on the table, with the handkerchief side away from the audience. Any ordinary candle may be used.

The second handkerchief is handed with the candle for examination, and when returned is rolled up and

vaniſhed by palming, as before described. It is palmed in the right hand, but the left is kept closed to lead the audience to think that it holds the handkerchief. Holding this closed left hand in the air, lean over and reach for your wand with your right. In doing so drop the palmed handkerchief upon your *servante*. Then pretend to throw the contents of the left hand toward the candle; open the left hand in doing so, and show both hands to be empty. Go to the candle and announce that you will light it. For this purpose take a match from the box, and, after striking it, close the box,—

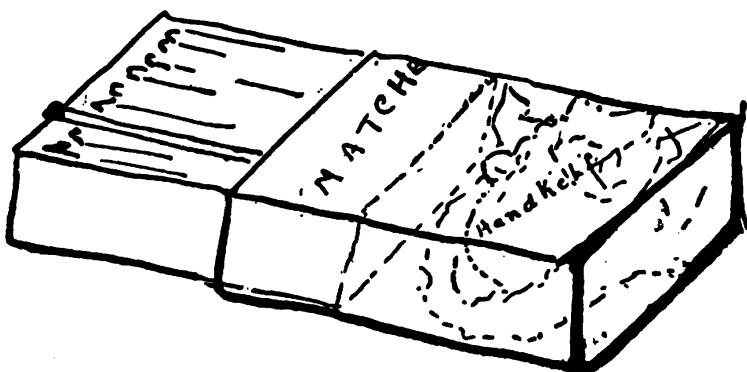


FIG. 40

thus forcing the concealed handkerchief into the palm, where it is retained. Lift out the candle with the same hand, and approach the audience, making various catches at the flame with the left hand, grabbing quickly and darting back. Suddenly pretend to draw out the handkerchief, closing the left hand,—and dropping the candle quickly, and bringing the hands together, reveal the handkerchief.

THE SOUP-PLATE AND HANDKERCHIEF

For the next trick the performer needs two handkerchiefs which he shows, together with an empty soup-

plate, which he places upside down on the table, after spreading a newspaper beneath it, "in order to prevent any idea of assistance from below." He takes the two handkerchiefs between his hands; they disappear, and, upon lifting the soup-plate with the tips of the fingers, the performer discloses both handkerchiefs beneath it.

The neatest way of vanishing the handkerchief is the method already described, in which the *bag* is used. If this is not large enough to hold them both, vanish one by some other means before described. To cause them to appear under the soup-plate, cut out a round piece of cardboard so as to exactly fit the bottom of the plate. On one side of this paste newspaper, and on the other highly glazed white paper. From a short distance this will look like the china itself. Place two duplicate handkerchiefs in the bottom of the plate, and cover them over with the false bottom, glazed side uppermost. When this is held towards the audience it will appear to be the bottom of the plate itself. The false bottom should be a little loose—sufficiently so to enable it to fall out when the plate is inverted. It can be kept in place by the fingers while exhibiting it to the spectators. It will be remembered that the underside of the false bottom is covered with newspaper; and, therefore, when the plate is inverted, and the false bottom falls out, there being a newspaper underneath the plate, the audience will still be unaware of any trickery, and the handkerchiefs will be discovered to be lying under the plate, which may then be handed for examination.

THE SHOWER OF SWEETS

The following is a very antiquated trick, but one which is always hailed with acclaim from the juvenile portion of the audience. The performer borrows a

handkerchief, and spreads it upon his table. He then lifts it by nipping it between his first finger and thumb. A lady is asked to breathe upon it, and a perfect shower of small candies and sweetmeats falls upon a plate held underneath, to catch them.

The secret lies in the use of a small bag of muslin or calico, made of the shape shown in Figure 41. When filled, it is closed by holding down the flap, and hooking the little ring over the hook, as shown. When it is time to open it, the hook is slightly tilted forward, and the lower flap falls down,—thus allowing its contents to shower down upon a plate held to receive them.

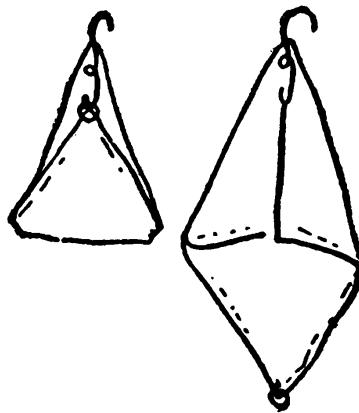


FIG. 41

This bag is hooked onto the back of the table, and, in the act of picking up the handkerchief, the little hook at the top is grasped through the handkerchief, and the bag is drawn,—by means of the hook,—up into the sheltering folds of the handkerchief. A plate is then held beneath, a lady is asked to breathe upon it, and the "shower of sweets" descends. While walking behind the table to hand the plate of sweets to the audience, the bag is quickly dropped onto the *servante*, and the handkerchief is returned.

**THE DISAPPEARANCE AND REAPPEARANCE OF A
HANDKERCHIEF**

This feat, though simple, is one of the prettiest sleight-of-hand feats in existence.

Use a fine, small, silk handkerchief. Between the joint of the thumb, and the forefinger of the left hand conceal a piece of the same silk rolled up into a ball. Roll up your sleeves, and show both hands empty. Show the handkerchief, and pass it around for inspection. Then take it between your hands, and roll it up into a ball, which you pretend to pass to your left hand, but really palm in your right. Let the small bit of silk in the left hand expand, so that the audience can see it, and they will be sure that the handkerchief is really there. While this is going on, drop the real handkerchief out of your right hand onto the *servante*. After a becoming amount of patter, join hands, and roll the bit of silk into a tiny ball and put it back in its original place. Then show both hands empty, the handkerchief gone. Cause the handkerchief seemingly to reappear, by allowing the small piece of silk to expand again, and finally to disappear, by vanishing the silk.

NEW HANDKERCHIEF VANISH

This "vanish" can only be performed for one person at a time; and if several persons are present, you must ask them to close their eyes, each in turn, while you show the person for whom you are performing the vanish. After you have demonstrated it to one person, you pass onto the next, allowing the first person to keep his or her eyes open; and great will be the amusement at seeing the look of wonder on the face of each person in turn, as the trick is performed for them, and the rest of the onlookers see "how it is done."

The secret consists in rolling the handkerchief into a small ball, *close* to the face of the person to whom you are showing the trick. Say that at the word "three" you will make the handkerchief vanish. Count "One—two—three!" and at the word "three," by a rapid forward motion of the hands, throw the handkerchief over the head of your spectator. It will be absolutely invisible to him, for the quick forward movement of your hands will cause him to blink his eyes, involuntarily, for an instant—and in that instant the handkerchief has gone! Thus crudely stated, the trick may appear too simple to deceive any one, but, cleverly performed, is one of the most baffling sleights ever performed. The whole secret is getting *close enough* to the onlooker's face, and the ease and rapidity of the "throw," when this is done. Of course, all the spectators see where the handkerchief goes, and this only adds to their amusement as they see every one else mystified, in turn, by the same simple trick.

THE NEW CYLINDERS AND HANDKERCHIEF TRICK

Ellis Stanton, in his book on "Magic," gives the following capital little trick:

For this capital trick, you must provide yourself with two glass cylinders closed at one end. They may be procured from conjuring dépots, or constructed out of lamp chimneys by cementing glass discs at the ends of the chimneys. Preferably, they should have rounded bottoms, as depicted in the illustration.

The effect of the trick is as follows: On your table are two cylinders. In front of each lies a handkerchief, one yellow, the other red. Now, pick up your left-hand, yellow handkerchief, and place it in the right-hand cylinder; and the right-hand handkerchief (red) in

the left-hand cylinder (Fig. 42). Lay the cylinders once more on the table, and make a little speech about the rapidity with which articles sometimes change places, under the influence of atmospheric electricity. Pick up the cylinders, one in each hand, and move the hands quickly apart. In the same moment, the handkerchiefs change places like a flash of lightning.

The secret of this very clever illusion will become apparent on consulting the diagram (Fig. 43). The

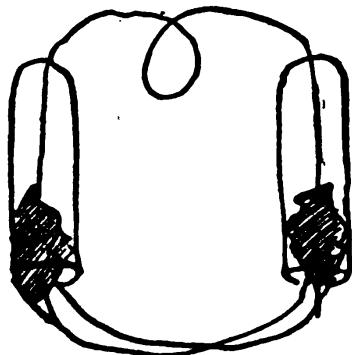


FIG. 42

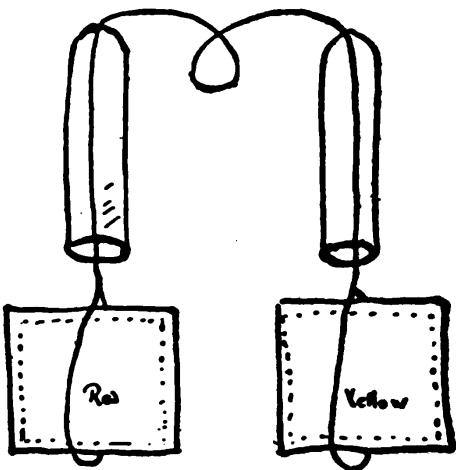


FIG. 43

cylinders have little holes in the bottoms. A strong silk thread is run through them and looped about the handkerchiefs. A few trials will have to decide the proper length of this thread. The explanation of this feat is simplicity itself, but the effect is very bewildering upon an audience.

COLOUR-CHANGING HANDKERCHIEFS

The Colour-Changing Trick is an exceedingly clever illusion, the requirements for which are as follows:

Four white handkerchiefs.

One blue handkerchief.

One yellow handkerchief.

One red handkerchief.

A piece of very thin cardboard, or stout cartridge paper, measuring seven by eight inches, gummed along one of its shorter edges.

"The red handkerchief (see Fig. 44) is in reality two

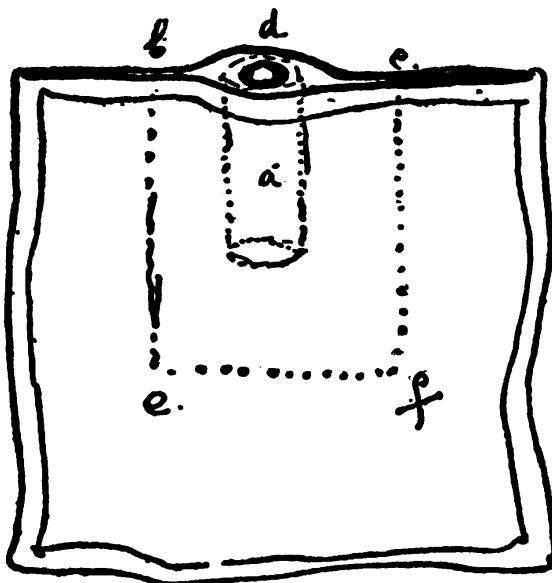


FIG. 44

handkerchiefs sewn together at the edges. Between them, midway in one of the sides, a tube 'a' of thin brass, is stitched, by means of three or four minute holes in its upper end, in such a manner that that end shall come just level with the edge of the double handkerchief, and so shall, when the handkerchief is spread out, be invisible. The presence of the tube naturally creates a hiatus between the two handkerchiefs at the centre. This is filled up by a gusset, b, e, f, c, of the same material. In the centre of this is a hole, d, encircled by a rubber band, which allows of its being expanded to nearly the circumference of the tube, but normally contracts it to a very small size, so as to be scarcely noticeable. Round the other three

edges of the square b, e, f, c, the two handkerchiefs are sewn together, the intervening space forming an internal pocket, only accessible through the tube, a, which is open at the bottom.

"To prepare the handkerchief for use, it is folded first vertically in halves, at the point where the tube is fixed. Beginning from the folded edge, the handkerchief is then rolled up, with the tube in the centre. Grasping the tube end with the right hand, the operator tucks the other portion of the handkerchief into the tube from the bottom, pushing it as far as it will go. (Fig. 45.) This leaves a portion of the tube still un-

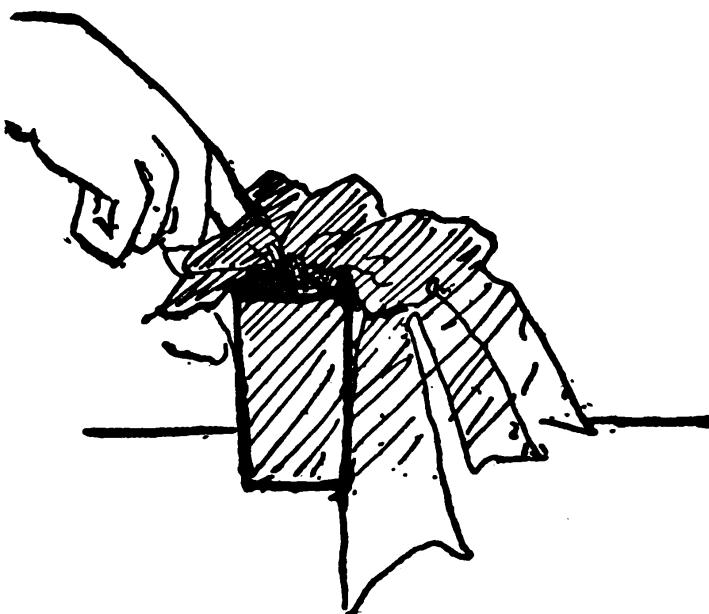


FIG. 45

occupied, and into this vacant space he packs first the yellow, then the blue, and lastly one of the white handkerchiefs. It will be found desirable to start with one corner, so that the opposite corner shall be the last portion to be inserted, and consequently the first to be squeezed out at a later stage of the trick. Each should be got well home before another is introduced.

"The double handkerchief thus prepared, and forming now a compact roll only a trifle larger than the tube itself is placed on his *servante*.

"The above arrangements duly made beforehand, the conjuror advances to the company, bringing forward the piece of cardboard, and the three remaining white handkerchiefs. Placing the latter on his table, he calls attention to the former, and, beginning from one of its shorter sides rolls it into a cylinder, allowing it to expand again. The performer then places this on his table, allowing the edge to rest over the *servante*—on which rests the tube containing the handkerchiefs.

"Showing his hands to be empty, he again picks up, with the right hand, the bent cardboard, and with it the tube. Again he rolls the cardboard into a cylinder, gradually making it smaller and smaller till it fits tightly over the roll, this latter resting with its upper end (the one with the hole *d*) within half an inch of one end of the cylinder. When matters have reached this point, he moistens the gummed edge of the cardboard with his tongue, and holds it down until there is no fear of its again unrolling."

[I may here digress for a moment to describe a pretty little "sleight" which the performer will find very useful, after he has picked up the paper with the tube behind it, to convince the spectators that he has nothing in his hands, save the piece of paper only. The paper is held by its upper right-hand corner, between the first and second fingers of the right hand, the tube being supported in a horizontal position (its upper edge, by the forefinger and the thumb, as shown in Figure 46). The performer takes the left-hand bottom corner between the first and second fingers of his left hand, and turns the lower edge of the paper upwards. When it has reached the position shown in Figure 47, the left thumb and forefinger seize the tube. The right hand moves away, and the original upper edge of the paper, now becoming

the lower, is released. Both sides of the paper have thus been shown, and the paper and tube remain in the left hand,—the transfer from hand to hand being a sort of tacit guarantee that there has been “no deception.”] *

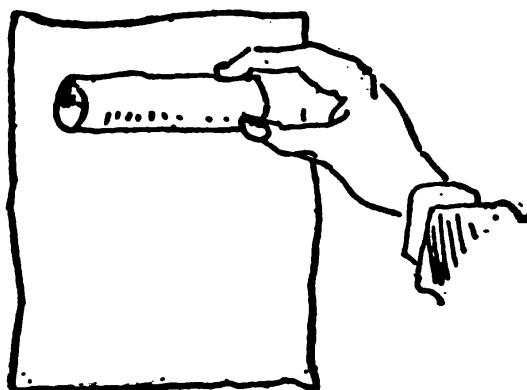


FIG. 46

Now, grasping the cylinder with the left hand (the end with the tube uppermost) he takes one of the white handkerchiefs, and pushes it down, first with the fingers, and then with the wand, apparently into the empty cylinder, but in reality through the hole *d*, and into

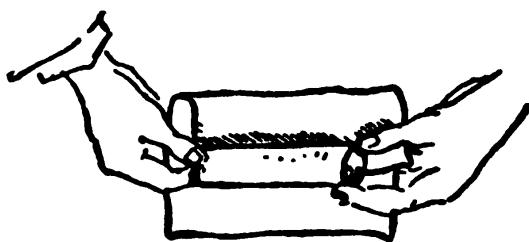


FIG. 47

the tube. As the tube is already full something must give way to make room for it, and this something is naturally the white handkerchief, which was the last to be packed into the opposite end of the tube, and which now begins to appear at the lower end of the cylinder.

* Adapted, with slight variations, from “Later Magic.”

To the eyes of the spectators this handkerchief is the same they have just seen introduced at the top, and they are thereby convinced (if indeed they entertained any doubt on the subject) that the cylinder is empty. The operator must of course take care that the handkerchief shall not fall out at the bottom before the one at the top has entirely disappeared, or the inference would be in the contrary direction.

Taking the white handkerchief that has just appeared he passes this in through the hole *d*, remarking that he is going to change its colour and turn it to blue. Accordingly, the blue handkerchief which comes next in order in the tube appears at the bottom of the cylinder. Laying this on the table, he takes another white handkerchief, presses it in at the top and produces it (apparently) at the bottom, yellow. Throwing the yellow handkerchief onto the table, he takes the remaining white handkerchief, and pushes this likewise through *d*. This forces out that portion of the red handkerchief which was packed into the tube, and which now appears at the bottom of the cylinder.

This is the critical part of the trick, for the white handkerchief is naturally introduced at the top in "anyhow" fashion, whereas the red one would, if permitted, come out rolled up,—which fact, if observed, would tend to create a doubt as to their being, as the conjuror professes, the same. To avoid this, as soon as the white handkerchief is fairly within *d*, and the red handkerchief pushed down to within half an inch or so of the bottom of the cylinder, the performer changes his procedure. Inserting a finger at the top of the cylinder, he gets hold of one of the upper corners of the handkerchief and holds it securely against the inner surface of the cylinder. Inserting the forefinger of the other hand, he now tears the cylinder open, and as it falls, getting hold of the opposite top corner of the handkerchief (the two lie, as will be remembered,

one upon the other) he draws them apart; spreads the handkerchief; shakes it out, and then catches it by the centre, taking care that the hidden tube shall hang on the side remote from the spectators. Picking up the blue and yellow handkerchiefs, he transfers them to the same hand, and laying them on the table, proceeds with some other trick.

NEW DECANTER, HANDKERCHIEF AND FLAG COMBINATION

The following is one of the prettiest, most charming, and graceful openings to a magical performance which has ever been devised, and is due to Mr. Frederick S. Keating, who worked out the combination described below. It has never failed to incite the heartiest appreciation and applause.

The performer makes his entrance, and, after showing his hands empty, with his fingers wide apart, produces a red, white, and blue handkerchief. He then picks up, from his table, two blue silk handkerchiefs, which he knots together and places in a glass decanter, which he stands on a small table, on the left-hand side of the stage, and which remains in full view of the audience throughout.

An unprepared piece of white paper is now shown, and rolled into the shape of a tube, open at both ends. The performer pauses for a moment, to explain that he will pass the red, white, and blue handkerchiefs through the tube, and in so doing, that they will melt into the flag the three colours symbolize. So saying, he pushes into the lower end of the tube the red handkerchief, which is followed by the white; but as the blue, which is next pushed in, is inserted into the tube, it drops to the floor, through the apparent carelessness of the conjuror. This inexcusable(?) carelessness is unnoticed by the performer, who, with a triumphant smile, pulls out from the opposite end of the tube what looks like

an American flag—but without the stars of blue! Disconsolately, he gazes at the unfortunate “fiasco,”—when suddenly he notices the blue handkerchief on the floor! He quickly picks it up, and, with the incomplete flag, pushes them both back in the tube—when, to the amazement of all, a complete American flag is pulled forth, which is laid on the table, and the paper crumpled up and thrown to the audience!

The performer now exhibits a decanter, similar to the first, in which he places the American flag. “Now, watch me closely,” says the magician, “for if you have sharp eyes, you will see the flag fly from this decanter, into the one opposite, and knot itself between the two blue handkerchiefs which it contains!”

No sooner said than done! With a rapid upward sweep of his right hand, which is placed over the mouth of the decanter, the flag is seen instantly and visibly to vanish. Advancing towards the other decanter, he pulls out the two blue handkerchiefs which it contains, and, to the amazement of the audience, the flag is now seen to be knotted between the two blue handkerchiefs.

The explanation of this extremely pretty and effective combination is as follows:

First, as to the production of the handkerchiefs. One very good way to produce these is to have the handkerchiefs, rolled up into a small package, tucked under the lower edge of the vest, and attached to a loop of black thread (the other end of which is fastened to the same side of the vest, beneath the arms). Now, by inserting the thumb in this loop, and giving a sharp outward pull, the handkerchiefs are brought into the hand. All three can be produced in this manner at once if desired; or they may be produced by any of the numerous other methods desired.

Having produced the handkerchiefs, the next step is to change them into the flag, and for this purpose an indispensable piece of apparatus is utilized. This is

known as a "handkerchief tube." (Fig. 48.) It is a tube about four inches long, and about half an inch in width. A glance at the accompanying diagram will make its construction clear. A piece of tin or brass tubing, of the required width, is cut to the desired length, and a series of tiny holes, about a sixteenth of an inch apart, are punched round the centre. A piece of strong black cloth is now made into a small bag, about half the length of the tube, and this is sewn solidly to the holes in the tube. The result is that the bag can be pushed in either direction, as far as the end of the tube.

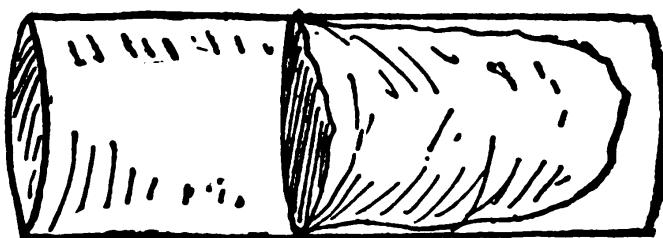


FIG. 48

The preparation for the trick is as follows: Place in one end of the tube, first, the American flag, then the incomplete flag. The tube, thus prepared, is placed on the back of the table,—the end with the flags facing to the left,—and is held in place by means of two pins or small pieces of bent wire, so that it rests just beneath the top of the table, and behind it. The piece of paper lies on the table,—the rear end just covering the tube.

The paper is now picked up,—and with it the tube,—and the paper is shown apparently empty, as explained in the last trick. The paper is now rolled round into a tube, and the white and red handkerchiefs are pushed in, the blue handkerchief being accidentally (?) dropped. Needless to say, these two handkerchiefs enter the tube,

and, as they are pushed in, the upper flag, at the other end, is pushed out. The incomplete flag is now extracted and shown.

Your apparent "mistake" is now discovered,—to the amusement of the audience,—and the blue handkerchief is picked up, off the floor, and pushed into the lower end of the tube, together with the incomplete flag. As these are forced in, the complete flag is pushed out. This is now extracted, and, in the act of showing it, the tube (containing all the handkerchiefs and the incomplete flag) is allowed to slip from the paper, onto the *servante*, by a slight relaxation of the fingers, holding it through the paper tube. The latter may then be unrolled and shown empty.

Now for an explanation of the disappearance from the first decanter and the reappearance of the flag between the two blue silk handkerchiefs in the second decanter.

Over the middle finger of the right hand, there is looped a fine loop of cat-gut, the end of which continues up the right sleeve, across the shoulder and under the vest, terminating in a loop, just about even with the top of the left-hand trouser pocket. If this is properly arranged, it will not interfere with the first part of the trick, during which the loop remains over the finger.

As he explains what is about to happen, the performer casually slips the flag *through* the loop in the right hand, which is pushed into the decanter with the flag. Now, standing with his right hand toward the audience, and holding the decanter by the neck, with his right hand over the mouth, the performer, at the word "three," rapidly extends his right hand and arm out to their fullest extent, and at the same time the left hand catches the loop which comes from under the vest on that side, and gives it a smart downward pull. In consequence of this, the flag will be drawn from

the decanter and carried quickly and invisibly "up the sleeve!"

This is done so rapidly, however, that not even the sharpest eye can detect the movement. Of course the left hand is not seen by the audience, being under cover of the body.

As you place the decanter back on the table, quickly gather up, with the left hand, the loop of cat-gut (which has increased on that side) and stuff it into your trouser pocket. Though it remains here during the performance, it will not interfere in the least with your movements; in fact, it will hardly be noticed. Only in the first part of the trick will a little practice be required, so as to perform it smoothly, without the cat-gut interfering with your movements.

Great care must be taken not to extend the right hand *too much*,—lest the left-hand loop be drawn up under the vest! This, however, can be avoided by sewing a hook to the top of the trousers, on that side, to which you attach a loop, till the time comes for its use.

Now for the knotting of the flag between the two silk handkerchiefs!

One of the handkerchiefs is prepared in the following manner: Sew, from the opposite corners, a triangular piece of the same material, thus making half the handkerchief a sort of triangular-shaped bag, leaving an opening about an inch and a half in the upper corner. To this same corner is knotted a duplicate flag. This flag is then pushed into the "bag," thus formed, leaving only a small tip extending, and as this is blue, and the colour of the handkerchief is blue, it is not noticed. Now, when the other handkerchief is tied to the corner of the first, it is *really* tied to the corner of the flag, inside it, and the result is that the three are now really tied together, with the flag in the middle.

In placing the package into the decanter, place the prepared handkerchief in first, and leave a corner of

the real handkerchief protruding, so that when you take it and give it a smart upward "flick" or jerk, the flag will be pulled from its hiding-place, in the fake handkerchief, and come out second. Care must be taken in knotting the handkerchiefs together not to show any of the flag in so doing.

CHAPTER V

TRICKS WITH EGGS

A NUMBER of excellent tricks may be performed with eggs, but as they generally necessitate quite an amount of dexterity to manipulate them properly, I shall confine myself to a few of the simpler tricks.

TO MAKE AN EGG STAND UPRIGHT

One of the first things to learn is how to make an egg stand upright! To make an unprepared egg do this is practically impossible, the yolk being relatively lighter than the white; and as it is held suspended near the centre, it is constantly shifting, the centre of gravity also shifts, and the egg of course tumbles. To make it stand upright, therefore, it is necessary to violently shake the egg, so as to break the yolk, and distribute it thoroughly among the white. The centre of gravity is thus stabilized, and the egg may be balanced on its larger end.

The performer, therefore, offers a plate of eggs to the audience, inviting any one among the company to try and make one stand upon its end. In his left hand, he has a prepared egg palmed, and when all have failed to accomplish the desired result he receives the plate of eggs back and, substituting his prepared one for one which the audience has already tried, he proceeds to make it stand upright on the table!

THE SPINNING EGG

Spinning an egg on end is also a trick which, like the last one, could hardly be introduced to an audience as

a separate experiment, but which may be introduced to a small company,—a “parlour audience”—with advantage. An egg—one of several on a tray—is offered to the company, and they are invited to try and spin it round like a top. They try, and fail. The performer receives the egg back, and proceeds to make it spin as long as he pleases. The secret lies in the fact that the performer substitutes a *hard boiled* egg, which may be spun round on its larger end, by the finger and thumb; and kept spinning by giving the tray a revolving motion on its own plane in an opposite direction to that of the egg.

TO PRODUCE AN EGG FROM AN ORDINARY HANDKERCHIEF

This is an improvement upon the egg bag, and has other points in its favour, not the least of which is that

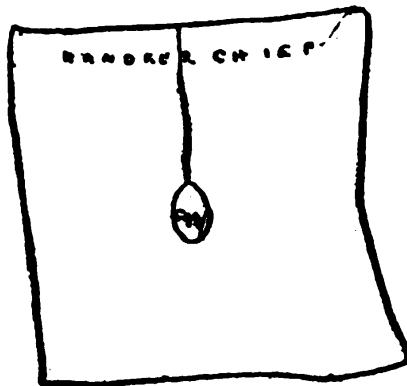


FIG. 49

it is less known. The handkerchief should be large,—say eighteen inches square, made of some stout, closely-woven material. To one of its edges, about the centre, is fastened a black silk thread, and at the other end of the thread is fastened a blown egg. The string should be just long enough to allow the egg to hang down a fraction of an inch below the centre of the handkerchief,—from its edge, when the handkerchief is held by the corners of the side to which the thread is attached. (Fig. 49.)

To show the handkerchief empty, palm the egg, and with the same hand grasp the right-hand corner of the handkerchief, with the left hand grasp the left-hand corner. Then, by crossing the hands, show the other side. Thus the back of the hand containing the egg will always be kept toward the audience. When this is done, instantly drop the egg; and in order to prevent it from swinging too far, and thus disclosing itself, lower both hands and the handkerchief a little quickly. The handkerchief may then be laid down anywhere, but care



FIG. 50

should be taken always to pick it up by the two corners of the side to which the egg is attached. The next step is to borrow a hat, and a handkerchief from the audience. First, show the hat empty, then place the borrowed handkerchief in the bottom to prevent breakage. The hat is then shown to contain only the carefully-folded borrowed handkerchief. The prepared handkerchief is then folded in halves, by placing together the two corners you hold, as you pick it up, holding them in the right hand, and with the left folding it over once more. The handkerchief will thus form a sort of loose bag, open at both ends, with the egg hanging down inside it. (Fig. 50.) Tilt the bag to a horizontal position above the hat; if you now tilt it still more toward the hat, the egg will roll out of the right-hand end and fall into the hat,—the silk thread giving plenty

of room for its fall. The audience thus sees one egg fall out of the apparently empty handkerchief into the hat.

As more than one egg is to be produced from the handkerchief, the next step, and perhaps the most difficult part of the trick, is to get the egg out of the hat without being observed. This may be accomplished in this wise: The left hand drops the two corners it holds, and the handkerchief falls partially in front of the hat. The left hand then grasps one of the corners (until then held in the right hand), the right hand retaining its hold on the other corner. When the handkerchief is raised, it will be in exactly the same position as before,—the egg hanging down from the edge to the centre of the handkerchief, and concealed by the latter, so that the trick may thus be repeated.

When this has been done some twelve or fifteen times, the audience begins to think that the hat must be full; and the performer may pick it up, with the assumption of great effort, and with effective by-play, turn it upside down,—and exhibit it as being—empty!

CHAPTER VI

PIECES OF APPARATUS OF GENERAL UTILITY

THE following pieces of general apparatus will be extremely useful, and should be among the properties of every conjuror. They may be used for a variety of tricks, and for general utility cannot be surpassed.

The Mirror Tumbler.—One of the most useful is the glass tumbler, partitioned off by a mirror through the centre. (Fig. 51.)



FIG. 51

This piece of apparatus, in its simplest form, is just an ordinary tumbler, preferably one having a stand, and sides fluted at the top, with a small mirror of movable patent glass. The silvered side is protected by a coat of varnish, and thus may contain any liquid without injury to the mirror. When the glass is placed with the mirror, facing squarely towards the audience, there is no reason to suppose that the glass is not thoroughly transparent, while in reality the other compartment may

contain anything from a bouquet of flowers to a silk handkerchief.

Thus, if the performer wishes to produce—say, a glass of sweets from an empty tumbler, he merely fills the invisible compartment with the candies, places the mirror in the centre, and to the audience the glass will appear to be perfectly empty. The handkerchief may then be placed over it for an instant, then the mirror grasped by the thumb and finger, and revolved with the handkerchief. The candies are thus revealed, and may be quickly distributed.

The mirror may also be made double, and this allows both sides of the tumbler to be shown at different intervals, without suspicion being aroused. Thus, if it is desired to change a guinea pig into a rabbit, a large glass bowl is provided. One animal is placed in one of the compartments, and the other animal in the other. All that is necessary to effect this change is a twist of the glass, which brings the other half toward the spectators,—with the other animal, and provided both of the animals are sufficiently docile, the trick is done. If it is desired to exchange two handkerchiefs, this double mirror again becomes effective, and only a twist of the glass is necessary. Indeed, if the performer is perfectly at ease, he may not need to cover the tumbler at all, but simply taking it up from the table, may transfer it from one hand to the other, and thus bring about the necessary twist by means of the semi-circle described by the arm.

It is well, in the case of the double mirror, to have it lined with felt. This should project about an eighth of an inch beyond the silvered glass. This prevents any rattling, and also causes it to fit with greater snugness.

The secret compartment is also a very useful place in which to deposit small articles which, having served their turn, are no longer required. With a careless movement, the article may be dropped into the hinder-

most compartment, and the glass removed shortly after by an assistant, who then makes the necessary disposition of the article for the purposes of the trick being presented.

The Bottomless Tumbler.—The next manufactured property, which the conjuror will find to be a friend in need, is what is known as the “bottomless tumbler.” This is purely and simply an ordinary tumbler, the bottom of which has been removed. The use of such a piece of apparatus is obvious. For instance, a borrowed article, say a glove, is plainly dropped into the glass, which the performer holds at arm’s length, in his hand. A cover is now placed over the glass for an instant, and the whole deposited upon a stand. The glove, which appears to be so safe within the tumbler, may, of course, be easily palmed by the conjuror; and thus caused to appear at any convenient moment in some entirely unsuspected place, while the performer has not approached the glass since placing it upon a stand in full view of the spectator. An egg, a ball, a watch, or a folded handkerchief, in fact any article may be treated in just the same manner.

An improvement upon this is the following: Instead of removing the *whole* bottom, remove a circular disc from it,—thus leaving a rim of about half an inch all round. This rim will keep many articles within the glass, while it is being shown, and the hand of the conjuror does not need to be kept continually under the bottom.

This will even allow the performer to pour water into the glass to show that it is entirely without preparation. To do this, the bottom of the glass will have to be absolutely flat, and a thin disc, fitting both into and over the bottom, must be provided. If a little grease, say, vaseline, be spread over the lower edges, the glass will be quite

watertight so long as the disc is kept from shifting. If the finger be held under the glass, this contingency will be provided for; and, after the water is poured out, or drunk, the glass may be wiped, and the disc and vaseline removed at the same time.

The Vanisher.—The very useful “vanisher” is also a good thing for the would-be magician to provide himself with. This appliance is made of tin, circular in shape, about three-quarters of an inch in diameter, and the same in depth. One segment of this hollow circular disc of metal is cut off, together with the accompanying part of its side, and an opening formed. (See Fig. 52.) A small, sharp hook

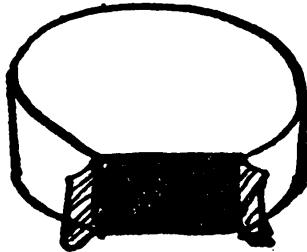


FIG. 52

projects from one side, and after the handkerchief is worked into the receptacle, the whole may be hung on the back of a chair, hooked into a table cover, or any drapery that happens to be handy, or to the performer’s clothes,—as may be desirable. If one of its flat sides is smeared with glue, this box may be stuck to the back of the performer’s hand.

The amateur conjuror can make one of these little boxes for himself with strips of cardboard. The two side pieces are first cut out, the required shape; then a strip, about half an inch wide, which is bent round, and fastened solidly between the two side pieces, by means of adhesive tape. The whole is now painted flesh colour, and a piece of magician’s wax is stuck on one

side of the box. If, now, the handkerchief be worked into this box, the latter may be moved over, on the ends of the second and third fingers of the right hand,—under cover of the left,—and stuck onto the back of the left hand. The handkerchief and box are now out of sight, and the hand may be held open, as before, while the fingers of the right hand “work,” as though containing the handkerchief, and finally shown empty. Or, a fine loop of thin cat-gut may be attached to the upper ends of the box, and this, slung over the thumb of the left hand, will effectually hold the box in place.

THE BRAN GLASS

A glass of bran may be instantly changed to a glass of sweets, or any other article, in this manner:

The performer brings forward a glass of bran, and to prove that it is such, he scatters some upon the floor. A cover, that has been examined, is then placed over the goblet; and upon its removal, the bran is nowhere to be seen,—the glass being full of candies, nuts, etc., which are scattered among the audience, and readily demolished by the youngsters present,—in spite of the mystery surrounding their presence, and magic appearance.

A hollow cardboard shape is made to fit inside the glass, which is generally a goblet, large or small, according to whether for stage or drawing-room use. The cardboard shape is open at the bottom only, and outside bran is glued on, so that, when placed in a goblet, it appears like a glass full of bran. The hollow inside of the cardboard shape is first filled with sweets, or if preferred, some borrowed article, and then placed in the glass. (Fig. 53.) A cover, generally made of brass, with the sides tapering outwards, is made to go over the goblet, and when pressed down hard the rim of the bran-covered shape becomes jammed, and when the cover is raised, the bran-shape rises also, unseen, and

the sweets, or other articles, are left in the glass. Some loose bran is always heaped upon the top of the tin shape, and blown to the floor at the commencement, so as to disarm suspicion. If preferred, a borrowed handkerchief may be employed, instead of the cover. In this case, the top rim of the bran-covered shape is palmed through the handkerchief and removed with it.

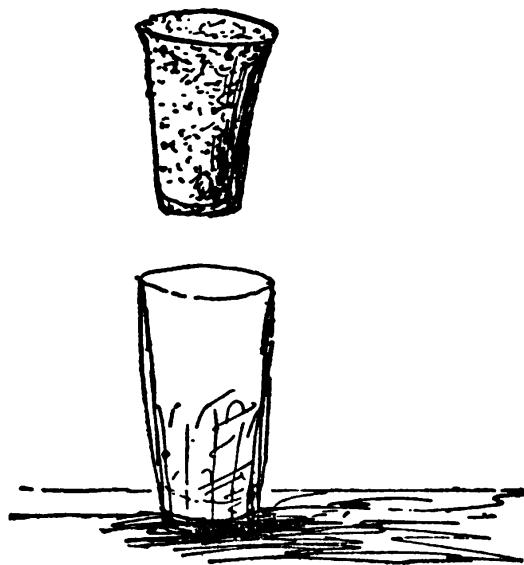


FIG. 53

The Drawer Box.—This is a piece of apparatus which is frequently used in magic, and in appearance looks very much like the individual files used for card indexes. It consists of a drawer, with a small knob upon the outside, by which to remove it. This drawer contains a coverless wooden box, only a trifle smaller than the drawer, and fitting into it with perfect snugness; the drawer itself has no back, only three sides and a base, and thus may be withdrawn together with the telescoped box, or without it, as the needs of the moment require. Thus, if it is desired to show the drawer empty, it is pulled out to its entire length, and nothing can be seen, while the box, which remains inside the case, may

contain anything from a pack of cards to a live rabbit. (Fig. 54.)

The manner of controlling the movements of the box is very ingenious. The base of the case, which is covered with thick felt, contains a delicate spring, connected with a catch, or stud, upon the inside of the drawer. The stud corresponds with a small groove upon the base of the box; and, when the catch is pressed by the fingers of the performer from the outside, the stud falls into the groove, fastening the box to the drawer, and the box is withdrawn, with its contents, when the

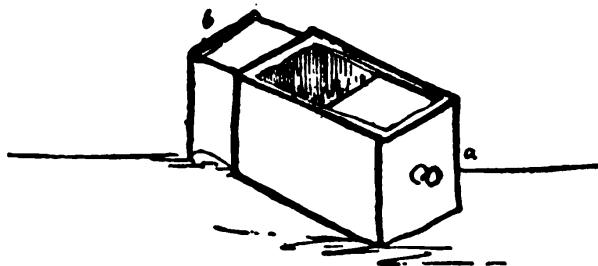


FIG. 54

drawer is removed. The inner box is made of such thin pieces of wood that a casual observer would not notice the difference in the thickness of the drawer, with or without it. Besides, the upper edges of the drawer are slightly turned over at the top, which further conceals the presence of the inner compartment, when they are withdrawn together.

The Inexhaustible Portfolio.—This is an ordinary-looking portfolio, similar to those used to accommodate music or drawings. It is shown to be perfectly empty, but when placed on the table, with its back to the audience, the performer is enabled to produce from it a variety of the most diverse objects. From time to time it is shown to be empty, and again the productive process is repeated. (Fig. 55.)

The external decoration of the portfolio takes the shape of a panel. This panel on one side of the portfolio forms a trap, closed by an inner cover, or intermediate leaf, to which the panel is glued. When the

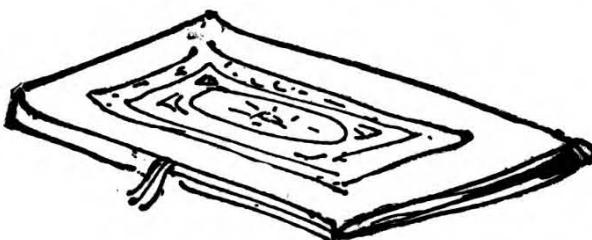


FIG. 55

portfolio is first opened to show it empty *a* lies flat against the lower side, and the trap is closed; but when the portfolio is laid open upon the table for the performance of the trick, it is opened with the intermediate leaf against the upper side, so leaving the trap open.

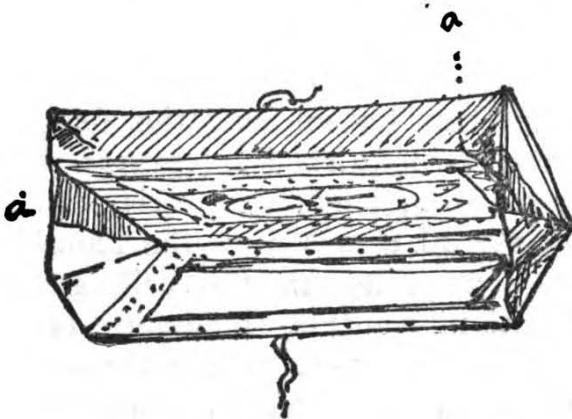


FIG. 56

(Fig. 56.) The portfolio is drawn partly off the table, and the opening thereby brought over the *servante*,—enabling the performer to thrust his hand *through*, and bring up the objects to be produced, which beforehand have been placed on the hidden shelf.

The Black Silk Thread.—It has often been said that a black silk thread is “the conjuror’s best friend.” A great number of tricks can be performed by its aid, some of which I have given before; and I now give two or three other tricks which may be effected by means of this simple piece of mechanism.

THE MAGNETIZED POKER

One of the most amusing, and at the same time one of the simplest, feats is known as the “magnetized poker.” A black thread is attached to the trouser legs at the knees, the length being suited to the legs of the performer, and varying from six to twelve inches in length. When the knees are separated, this thread becomes taut; and if a poker be leaned against it, it will remain in an upright position,—kept so by the thread. The performer should make as many passes over the poker as necessary to “magnetize” it before the trick commences, and effective patter is very essential for the successful production of this simple feat.

THE DANCING HANDKERCHIEF

Another illusion known as “the dancing handkerchief” is also accomplished by means of the thread. The simplest way of performing this is merely to have a black silk thread attached to the handkerchief, and, running over a pulley in the ceiling. The fundamental objection to this, however, is that nearly every one at once suspects that a thread is being employed. In order to offset this, and to enable him to pass his hands *above* and *below* the handkerchief while it is dancing about, the performer resorts to the following device: A black thread is stretched entirely *across* the stage; one end of this is attached to a hook about eighteen inches from the ground, the other end being in the hand of an assistant. When not in use, this thread is allowed to lie slack, and will re-

main on the carpet invisible. The instant it is pulled taut, however, it rises to a height of some eighteen inches or more, and the handkerchief, which was carelessly thrown over this thread, naturally rises with it, and dances about in its well-known amusing manner.

THE RAPPING WAND

This principle also explains the tricks known as "The Rapping Wand," and "The Rapping Hand." In both these cases, a black silk thread is stretched entirely across the stage, as before, and is elevated by the assistant who stands behind the screen. In the first case, the wand is merely placed over the thread, and naturally rises an inch or two whenever the thread is slightly tightened. It comes down onto the table with an audible thud, which is interpreted as a "rap."

THE CLIMBING RING

The black thread is also responsible for the raisings and lowerings of a borrowed ring,—placed over the magician's wand. The wand has a needle slightly projecting from one end, and over this is slipped a loop of black thread. The other end of the thread is attached to the top button of the performer's waistcoat. A borrowed ring having been slipped over the wand, it naturally carries with it a certain "slack" of the black silk thread. All the performer has to do, therefore, in order to cause the ring to rise upwards, is to push the wand (held in an upright position) further from his body, or, with the other hand, depress the slack which exists between his body and the wand. This will cause the ring to rise until it reaches the top of the wand, where it may be removed, and at once handed for inspection. (Fig. 57.)

THE MESMERIZED WAND

The performer shows his hand to be empty and passes his wand for inspection. When it is returned to him, it

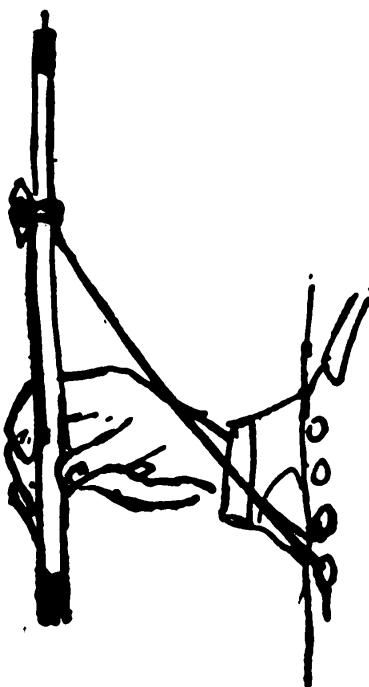


FIG. 57

will apparently remain attached to his finger tips in any position he may desire.

For this trick it is necessary to have a silk thread tied to the top button of your waistcoat at one end, and to the bottom button at the other. The wand is then received back by the performer. The hand holding the wand is placed through the loop,—in such a way that the thread is on one side of the wand, and the pressure of the fingers on the other. Thus, by pressing your hand against it, the wand will seemingly lie horizontally in the air,—as though stuck to the palm of the hand. The stick may be shifted to almost any position, and, if the pressure of the fingers be sufficient, it will remain without any visible support.

TABLE LIFTING

Table Lifting may be introduced as a mesmeric effect. A small, three-legged, or other light-weight table is used,

and is preferably covered with plush or velvet. A fringe hangs round it. In the centre of the table a pin is driven, leaving the head, and about an eighth of an inch of the stem projecting. This will be invisible in the midst of the plush. A finger ring, worn on the second or third finger of the right hand, has a little groove cut into it, all the way through to the finger. The head of the pin may thus be slipped inside, and the stem project through the groove, and the table be maintained by steadyng it with the other fingers of the hand.

The table is shown to the audience, and the hands exhibited and wiped to prove that they are empty, and without glue. After the usual passes, the hands are lowered to the table, the pin slid into groove in the ring, the table lifted, and after swinging it around in various ways, one hand removed. Finally, advance to the audience, give the table a twist, turning it upside down, and with a quick jerk (apparently to show that there is nothing underneath), remove the pin from the table, by means of the ring, and give the table for immediate examination. While this is going on, remove the pin from your ring by the thumb of the same hand and show your hands empty. An additional effect may be produced by suddenly affecting to hear that glue or electricity was used to perform the feat. To prove that neither was employed, take out a large silk handkerchief and smooth it over the top,—at the same time, of course, causing the pin to penetrate it. Then slide the pin in the groove, and elevate the table as before, removing the pin at the end, and offering the handkerchief and table for examination.

An ordinary wooden chair may be lifted by this means; and a large wooden table by using two rings, and a pin driven into either end.

THE FLOATING HAT

The principle just enunciated suffices to explain, also, the "Floating Hat," which is another illusion produced by the aid of the black thread. A loop some two feet long is passed over the magician's head and neck, hanging in front of him, but invisible, against his black clothes. A hat having been borrowed, it is dexterously passed through the loop, mouth downwards, and the performer, placing his fingers upon the crown of the hat, and pressing downwards, is enabled to raise it, and apparently cause it to remain suspended in space, without visible means of support.

CHAPTER VII

MISCELLANEOUS TRICKS .

The Multiplying Wand.—The performer comes forward with a plain, polished ebony conjuring wand of the ordinary pattern, which he waves about in the air, when it is suddenly seen to have multiplied into two. He then wraps one of these in a piece of newspaper, which he instantly crushes into a small compass in his hands, the wand having entirely disappeared.

It is needless to say that, to produce the above effect, two wands are necessary. One, however, is very different from what it is represented to be, being a mere shell of black, glazed paper.

Prior to the commencement of the trick, the solid one is encased in the shell, and in this condition it is brought on the stage. In the course of waving it about, the solid wand is allowed to slip out of the case, a wand then being shown in each hand. These can both be proved, in conjuror's logic, to be perfectly solid by adopting the following ruse:

The performer strikes the table several times with the wand in the right hand, which is the solid one, after which it is apparently placed in the left hand, and the wand already there treated in the same manner. When, however, the two are both together, in the left hand, the solid one is taken again,—but the spectators, having no reason to suspect trickery, will suppose that the wands have actually changed places. The shell is then rolled up in a piece of paper, and crushed in the hands, when, to all appearances, the wand will have disappeared.

The trick may very well end here, or the vanished wand may be reproduced. This may be done by having previously concealed a second solid wand in the leg of the trousers, in a pocket similar to that in which carpenters carry a rule. The two solid wands may then be struck together, proving their solidity beyond a doubt.

THE PHANTOM WAND

This trick makes an admirable opening for a performance of magic.

The magician takes his wand and proves its solidity by striking it upon the table or the back of a chair. He then exhibits a long envelope, into which he pushes the wand, "to prove that there are no double compartments," etc., and that it is just large enough to contain the wand. The wand is then removed and wrapped up in a piece of newspaper.

The performer then steps into the midst of the audience, explaining that he will cause the wand to leave his hands and fly from the newspaper, through space, into the paper envelope which he has just shown to be empty. With great solemnity he then pronounces the mystical "hocus pocus," and like a flash he crumples the paper and tears it into a dozen pieces. . . . The wand has apparently melted into thin air! The envelope is then handed to some member of the audience, who tears it open, and there is the magic wand—quite unaffected by its "*wanderful*" journey through space!

And now for the explanation! Around the wand was wrapped the paper "shell," painted to resemble the wand. When showing the envelope empty, instead of withdrawing the wand, as he appeared to, the performer simply allowed it to remain in the envelope, and withdrew, instead, the "shell," which, when wrapped in the newspaper, was readily crumpled up with it.

The best wand to use for this trick is a plain, polished

stick. Some black, shiny paper may readily be obtained from a stationery store, and, when rolled into the shape of a wand, can hardly be distinguished from the real article. It is advisable to paint the inside black.

WALNUT SHELLS AND PEA

This is an excellent table trick, and can be performed at close quarters without fear of detection. The only articles required for the execution of the trick are three half walnut shells and a pea. The three shells are laid in a row on the table, the pea being placed under the centre one, from which position it disappears and is ultimately found under either of the end ones, at the will of the performer. The table used must be covered with a cloth of some kind.

The secret lies in the "pea," which is fashioned from a piece of India rubber, but unless closely inspected, cannot be distinguished from the ordinary article. When performing the trick, the pea is actually placed under the middle shell. The shells are then, each in turn, commencing from the one on the left, pushed along the table about three inches. When moving the middle one, the pea, owing to its nature, and the concavity of the shell, will be found to work its way out, when it is instantly seized with the thumb and middle finger. This, however, cannot be suspected, as the hand retains a perfectly natural position. The third shell is then moved in a line with the other two.

The "pea" can now be caused to appear under either of the shells at pleasure, all that is necessary being to leave it on the table immediately behind the shell, in the act of raising it up.

THE "SPIRIT TOUCH"

This is more a joke than a trick, but it is amazing how much mystification can be caused by this simple sleight, when well performed.

The performer asks his spectator to sit or stand in front of him; at the same time saying: "Now I am going to place the first fingers of my two hands over your eyes; as I do so, please close the eyes, so that I can place them on your eyelids." Suiting the action to the word, the magician advances his two forefingers, until they almost touch the eyes of the onlooker. The latter closes his eyes, when, in the act of placing his fingers on the eyes, the conjuror quickly stretches out the first and second fingers of his left hand, and with these two fingers covers the eyes of his onlooker. The latter now feels two fingers touching his eyes, which he takes to be two first fingers; and is correspondingly surprised when he receives a "spirit touch" on the back of his head—which, needless to say, is performed with the disengaged right hand of the performer.

The instant the magician has touched the sitter, he must bring back his right hand, stretch out the first finger, and slowly withdraw both hands, as though drawing them away from the sitter's face. The rapidity with which he does this "makes" the trick, as the sitter is apt to open his eyes as soon as he feels the touch, and if he sees the magician bringing back his right hand and arm, the effect of the trick is, needless to say, spoiled. Rightly performed, this will be found to mystify many people.

THE TAMBOURINE TRICK

Mr. Burlingame, in his "Tricks in Magic," gives the following pretty little experiment:

"The visible apparatus for this feat consists of two flanged rings of nickeled brass, seven inches in diameter, as depicted in Figure 60; a square of white paper,—size about fourteen inches each way, and a pair of scissors. The one ring, A, is of such a size as to fit easily over the other (B). Having submitted the rings

and paper for examination, the performer, standing behind his table, explains that they are the materials for a tambourine. This he proceeds to construct by laying the sheet of paper on the top of B, and pressing A down over it, the thickness of the paper wedging the two rings together, and causing them to fit tightly. He trims off with the scissors the superfluous paper, and a neat tambourine is the result.

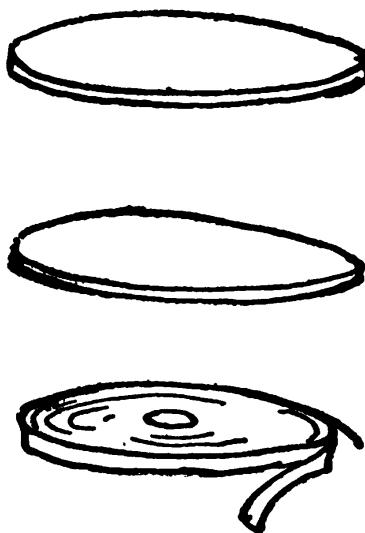


FIG. 60

"His next proceeding is to thrust his wand through the paper from the outside, and from the hole thus formed to draw yards upon yards of coloured paper ribbon, half an inch wide, the quantity when all is drawn out being enough to fill a wheelbarrow.

"For greater rapidity in extraction, after he has got out half a dozen yards or so, he inserts his wand within the coils, and draws out the remaining ribbon by quick circular sweeps of the arm. This brings out a couple of yards at a time, with very pretty effect.

"The secret lies in the fact that the paper produced is in the first instance coiled flat, after the manner of telegraphic paper,—in which condition a hundred yards or so occupies a very small space. When required for

use, this coil is suspended upon a projecting pin against the hinder side of the performer's table, just below the top, in line with the spot upon which the tambourine is to be formed. As soon as the one ring has been placed over the other, with the paper between, the performer with his right hand, picks up the scissors to trim off the superfluity. Meanwhile, the left hand, grasping the tambourine with the forefinger and the thumb, draws it backwards off the table, as shown in Figure 61.

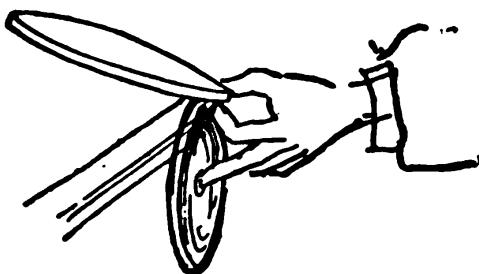


FIG. 61

Meanwhile, the middle finger, which is below the level of the table top, is inserted into the central opening of the coil, and withdraws both together, the coil naturally settling itself within the concavity of the tambourine. All difficulty is now over. The performer trims off the superfluity of margin as described, makes the hole through the centre, and produces the paper ribbon at leisure.

"Some performers dispense with the table, and conceal the coil at the outset underneath the arm, or inside the front of the vest.

"The tambourine is also made in a smaller size, four inches in diameter, but in this shape the trick is much less effective."

THE JAPANESE PAPER TRICK

The Japanese Paper Trick pleases an audience; as do most feats in which the performer introduces objects

into one portion of his body, and apparently reproduces them from another!

A small piece of tissue paper is exhibited, and slowly torn into eight strips. These the performer rolls up and places in his ear, and makes them reappear from his mouth. He then puts them in a glass of water, and stirs them round with a spoon, and afterwards collects them in the bowl of the spoon, and places them in one hand; gently fanning this hand the papers appear fluttering in the air, perfectly dry.

Three pieces of tissue paper are necessary for the performance of this trick, two of which are torn into eight strips, and two little packets made of them. Round one packet stick a little band of tissue paper, which may be easily broken; and, with a single drop of gum, stick this to one side of an ordinary Japanese fan, at its top edge. Have this fan lying on the table with the side upon which the paper is attached—turned down. Just before commencing the trick, place the other packet in your mouth. Come forward, and exhibit the third piece of tissue paper, and proceed to tear it up into eight strips, similar in appearance to the others already torn. Roll this up in a small ball, and either pretend to place it in your ear, palming it instead, or actually place and leave it there. Then produce the papers from the mouth, one by one, and drop them into a glass containing water. When all have been thus disposed of, take a spoon and stir them round, in order to wet them thoroughly, and then collect them in the bowl of the spoon, and empty them into the left hand. Squeeze them up into a ball, and retain them between the fingers. Take up the fan and advance toward the audience, saying a few appropriate remarks, and let the left hand naturally take hold of the top of the fan,—and thus, while talking, the third and remaining packet is dislodged, and rests on the left hand, which may easily break the tissue band. So, when the palm

is opened and the hand is fanned, the papers will be sent fluttering in the air.

THE TORN AND RESTORED CIGARETTE PAPER

The magician borrows an ordinary cigarette paper, and taking it with the tips of his fingers, tears it across and across again, until it has been torn into eight small pieces. Then, rolling these pieces together, he produces the paper whole again, as before.

As the reader has already suspected, the secret consists in substituting a whole piece of cigarette paper for the torn pieces; and the value of the trick consists in concealing this piece, and afterwards substituting it for the torn pieces. A very excellent method of doing so is as follows:

The whole piece of paper, rolled into a small ball, is held between the *first* and *second* fingers, near the tips. Now, taking the second piece of paper with the fingers of the *left* hand, the performer transfers it to the fingers of the *right*,—which effectually conceals the ball of paper beneath it. Both sides of the right hand and the left hand may now be shown empty. The paper is then torn, and torn again, each time showing the left hand empty. The small pieces of paper conceal the duplicate ball beneath them. Now, the pieces of paper are rolled into a ball, and in the act of doing this, the second finger of the right hand is pushed slightly forward, when the duplicate paper will be pushed under and into close contact with the torn strips, and forms what appears to be one ball with them. At this point, both hands may be shown empty. The ball of paper is then further rolled, and, while doing so, the duplicate ball is rolled to the *top* of the pile, and the torn strips are rolled into the place of the original duplicate ball—that is, between the first and second fingers of the right hand. The performer now unrolls the duplicate paper,—which conceals the original torn strips—and exhibits it.

Well done, this is a capital and very effective little trick.

RED OR BLACK?

This pretty trick consists in causing two balls, one red and one black, wrapped in pieces of paper, and placed in borrowed hats, to change places at command. The diameter of the balls is about $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The solution of the problem lies in the construction of the papers with which the balls are covered. They are arranged thus: Take two pieces of newspaper and paste them together all round the edges,—having previously inserted between one of them a layer of red glazed paper of the same shade as the ball. The other one is prepared in exactly the same way, but contains a layer of black glazed paper, to represent the black ball.

The two balls are now wrapped in the papers, care being taken to cover the red ball with the paper containing the black layer, and *vice versa*. After this has been done, the performer feigns a slip, mixing up the packages, and thereby confusing the audience as to the relative positions of the balls. As if to satisfy them on this point, he tears a small hole in the outer covering of one of the parcels, exposing (say) the layer of black paper. The parcel is then placed in the hat, on the supposition that it contains the black ball.

The other package is then treated in the same manner, after which the supposed transposition of the balls will be easily understood.

"MATTER THROUGH MATTER"

The effect of this puzzling little trick is as follows: The performer exhibits a solid glass ring, which may be freely examined. He explains that it is made of glass, to show that no slits, etc., are possible (which is a fact—the ring is solid). The performer then requests a member of the audience to hold his hand securely (as

though shaking hands) and, if desired, the two hands may be bound together by means of tape, etc. A borrowed handkerchief is now placed over the hands, so as to completely cover them. (It must be large.)

Now, taking the glass ring in the left hand, the magician places it under the handkerchief, stating that he is about to perform the experiment of passing "matter through matter"—and cause the ring to pass onto the wrist of his assistant,—"through his wrist." The assistant is cautioned not to let go of the magician's hand even for an instant, while so doing. In a moment, however, the handkerchief is removed, and the glass ring is seen to be on the assistant's wrist—the hands being as tightly clasped and bound together as before. The ring may again be examined, after being removed.

The explanation of this effective little trick is as follows: *Two* rings are employed, exactly alike. One of them is concealed beneath the coat-sleeve of the performer, prior to the trick. Now, under cover of the handkerchief, this ring is worked down, onto the magician's own hand, and over *both* hands, onto the wrist of the assistant. The trick is now done; the second ring being simply removed under cover of the handkerchief and disposed of, while the audience is gazing, wonder-struck, at the ring on the assistant's wrist. The handkerchief may now be returned, and the second ring taken off and passed for examination.

THE FLYING THIMBLE

This is a very simple little trick, being merely the passage of an ordinary thimble from the forefinger of one hand to the forefinger of the other, or to some other desired spot. Nevertheless, it may be presented with such variety, that it becomes a valuable asset to any conjuror. The first qualification necessary is to become expert in palming the thimble with the thumb muscle, in the fork between the thumb and the hand. Thus, if the thimble

is placed upon the forefinger, the latter may be rapidly bent, and the thimble deposited in its hiding-place in the hand. (See Fig. 62.) A reverse movement of the finger removes the thimble from the palm, and again

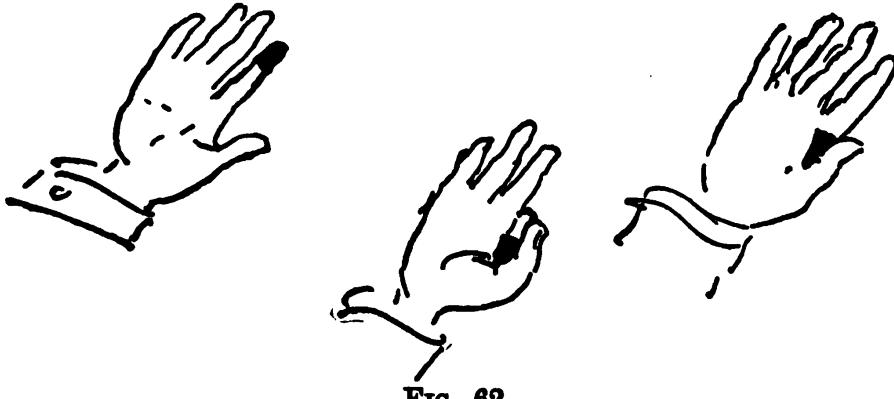


FIG. 62

places it upon the tip of the forefinger. This sleight is by no means difficult of acquisition, and if performed with the arm in motion, the smaller movement of the finger is quite invisible. The only special caution to be

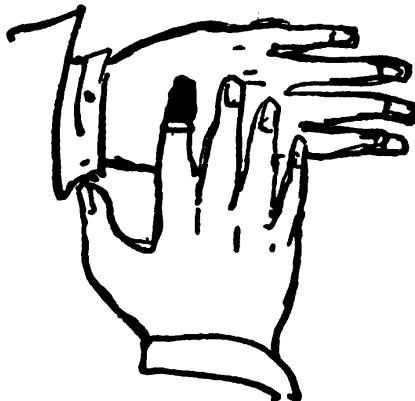


FIG. 63

observed is to keep the hand in which the thimble is palmed with its back toward the audience.

There are many passes and variations which the performer may use, but space confines me to the description of but a few. Some magicians begin with the hands in the position shown in Figure 63, the right hand hav-

ing a thimble upon the forefinger, and the left a thimble palmed in the fork of the thumb. He waves the right hand backwards and forwards alternately before and behind the other. As the fingers of the right hand vanish behind those of the left he palms the visible thimble as before described; at the same moment the forefinger of the left hand is bent, and the thimble appears upon it,—the effect being to the spectators that it has flown from one forefinger to the other.

A very good effect is to make the thimble presumably disappear through one part of the body and come out at another. Thus, the forefinger may be put into the mouth, with the thimble on it, withdrawn with the thimble absent, and again produced from behind the head with the thimble in its place. Again the thimble may apparently be put in one ear, and be recovered from the other, and other passes, of similar effect may be arranged by the amateur. When they are performed with ease and finish, they are both striking and amusing.

THE BROKEN MATCH TRICK

The effect of this very pretty and effective table trick is as follows:

The performer breaks off six small pieces of match (wooden) half an inch or less in length. Showing his hands empty, he places five of these, one at a time, into his left hand. He then takes the sixth piece of match, places it in his pocket; but, on opening his left hand, it is found to have joined the others! There are now six in the left hand. This may be repeated several times. Finally, the performer, in order to show that he himself does not place an extra piece of match in his hand, requests some onlooker to put them there himself. In spite of the fact that his hands are examined; in spite of the fact that the pieces of match are placed in the hand by some onlooker, they nevertheless continue to

multiply; and apparently nothing can prevent the five pieces of match from increasing to six!

As the initiated reader will have guessed, the trick consists in adding an extra piece of match (a *seventh* piece) to those placed in the left hand. This extra piece is palmed between the second and third fingers of the right hand,—thus leaving the first finger free. The pieces of match are picked up, one at a time, by the thumb and first finger of the right hand, and placed in the left. For the first four times, this act is free from trickery; but, on the fifth occasion, as the fifth piece is added, the concealed piece is also dropped into the left hand, which is then quickly closed,—thereby concealing the extra piece. The right hand is now shown empty, and the sixth piece is picked up and placed in the pocket. It is, however, still retained between the fingers, and immediately withdrawn, ready for the next trial. On the left hand being opened, the six pieces of match are, of course, shown.

In placing the matches in the left hand, it is often possible to throw them quite a distance through the air, and the two pieces may also be thus thrown, without detection, on the fifth occasion. This greatly adds to the effectiveness of the trick.

It now remains to explain how the matches multiply when the onlooker places the matches in the magician's hand himself. In this case, the performer's left hand is first carefully examined, and the attention of the onlookers is also called to the fact that there is nothing on the table. The left hand is held out, and the sitter is invited to place the matches in it himself. While indicating this hand to the sitter, the magician points to the palm of his left hand with the forefinger of his right hand, as though showing him where to place the pieces. This naturally brings the second and third fingers of the right hand beneath the left hand, and the concealed piece of match is dropped onto the table. The back of

the left hand is now lowered onto this piece, quickly, thus concealing it, while the counting continues. The sixth piece is placed in the pocket, as before, and the performer quickly turns over his opened hand, thus turning the five pieces of match in his hand onto the sixth piece on the table. The illusion is perfect, and six pieces of match are disclosed.

Other methods of concealing the piece of match are: Between the fingers; in the crease formed by the base of the thumb (back of the hand); between the finger tip and the under side of the table,—when the hand is so held that the tip of the finger falls just below the table, etc. The resourceful performer will vary the trick more or less every time he does it,—thus rendering its discovery almost impossible.

THE DISAPPEARING MATCHES

The following little trick, which is both pretty and effective, is to cause the disappearance of five or six

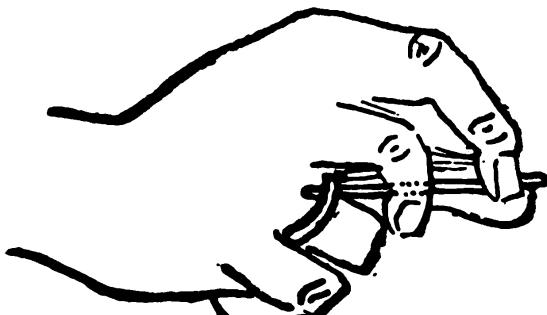


FIG. 64

matches, one at a time, from the finger tips. To perform it successfully, the conjuror must wear a ring that is a trifle too large for him on the third finger of the right hand. Holding a match between his first finger and thumb, and tossing his hand to cover the action, the performer must slip it under the ring on the back of the hand. The movement is more fully shown in the accompanying illustration. (Fig. 64.)

The other matches may be vanished in the same manner, and may be recovered again by a reverse action to that explained above. The fingers should be spread apart, to make it a really mystifying impromptu trick.

THE BENT WATCH

Borrow a watch, and remark that "it is really a very peculiar watch; it appears to be quite soft" or something to that effect. Then take the watch between your fingers, and apparently bend it backwards and forwards, as though it were a piece of tin!

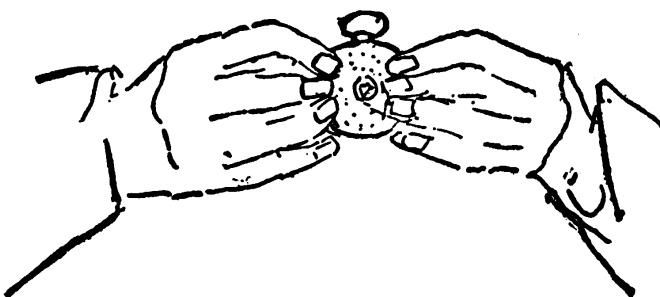


FIG. 65

The secret lies in an optical illusion. Take the watch between the fingers, each hand on the back and the two thumbs on the front, or face, and hold the watch with the dial toward yourself, as shown in Figure 65.

Now bend your hands outward, at the same time bringing your fingers nearer together, and the watch nearer yourself. Reverse the motion by pushing the watch from you, at the same time bringing the wrists nearer together, and the fingers farther apart. The result will be, if you alternately repeat these motions quickly, that the watch will appear to be bent almost double at each motion of the hands.

This is hardly a trick all by itself, but may be introduced as a sort of by-play to any trick in which a watch has to be borrowed.

THE WATCH WHICH STOPS AND GOES AT COMMAND

The following is a very amusing trick, and is always greeted with gales of laughter. The performer borrows a watch, and holds it up to his ear, and, nodding his head reassuringly, announces that it is going, all right. He then holds it to the ear of one of the audience, so that his judgment may be confirmed, and the spectator declares that the watch has stopped. "Oh, you must be mistaken," you cry, and offer it to another person to listen to; this person declares the watch is going, the next person declares it has stopped, and so on, each one contradicting the other.

The secret lies in a loadstone, which you have palmed in your right hand. When this is applied to a good watch (and it is well to see that the one you borrow is a good watch, and therefore has delicate works), the attraction will stop the movement, and the person to whose ear it is applied will declare it has stopped; when the loadstone is removed the watch will commence ticking again, or a slight shake will make it do so, and the next person will declare it is going, and so on.

FLOWER TRICKS

The Soup Plate and Flower Trick is pretty, and therefore, effective, especially with the ladies. An ordinary soup plate is shown to be empty, and waved in the air. Suddenly it is exhibited full of flowers, which may be distributed.

A rather flat bouquet, which may be concealed under one side of the coat, under the arm, is fastened to a strong thread,—the other end of which is passed through a hole, drilled in the plate, from the front, then attached to the lower button of the waistcoat. The plate is waved about, tapped with a wand, and so forth, and the thread is invisible. The arm then shoots out, the bouquet is jerked from its resting-place, and appears on the plate.

The flowers are then clipped off and distributed among the audience.

The Birth of Flowers is an old, but interesting trick. The performer comes forward holding in his hand a small cardboard box which he says contains seeds of various flowers.

"Here,—ladies and gentlemen,—there is no need of earth, moisture, and time to cause the seed to germinate, the plant to spring up, and the flowers to bloom. Everything takes place instantaneously! A wave of my magic wand over these seeds, and lo! the wonder will be performed! A few seeds are in this little box, which I will cover for an instant, so that it shall not be disclosed how flowers are born. I now wave my wand, and—

"But you are suspicious, I see, of this little box! Well, perhaps you are right. Very well; we will do without it! See, here is a goblet, all clear and transparent, so you may see that it is not prepared in any way. And now I shall borrow some gentleman's hat. Ah, thank you. Now, ladies and gentlemen, this hat is surely innocent of any preparation, and I place it for a moment over this little glass, and remove it quickly, and— What, no flowers there? Well, I *am* stupid, I forgot to sow the seeds! I will begin all over again. What flower do you want? A mignonette, a violet, a marigold, all are in here. Here is a seed of each kind, which I shall put into the glass. Now I cover the glass for just a moment, and count three, and— See the magnificent bouquet!"

Finally, the trick is finished by the performer producing a number of small bouquets which he offers to the ladies.

As we have said, the glass is first covered with a hat, and no flowers appear, at which the performer expresses his astonishment. But the moment when all

eyes are turned upon the glass to see the expected flowers, the hat is carelessly held near the edge of the table, and, while the audience is busy looking for the flowers, the performer's middle finger dips down and

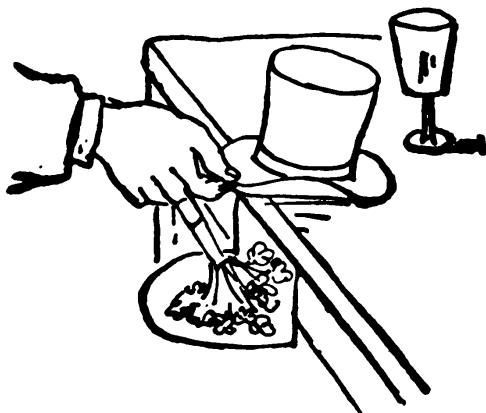


FIG. 66



FIG. 67

is inserted in the free end of a cardboard tube, whose other end keeps the flowers in place (see Fig. 66), and the bouquet is thus safely snapped into the hat. This latter is then held aloft, while a few seeds are placed in the glass, and when the hat is again placed over it, the bouquet appears. (Fig. 67.) The performer then ad-

vances smilingly, as though he were going to return the hat, but suddenly leans down toward his spectators, and says: "What, you want some flowers? And you? Are there others who would like some too? Well, then, I will go and plant the rest of my seeds."

While all eyes have been turned on the bouquet, which has just appeared in the glass, the performer has taken the occasion to introduce several small bouquets into the hat, and he now goes back, sprinkles the few seeds remaining into the hat, waves his wand, and produces and distributes the flowers.

A Button-Hole Rose may be made to appear instantaneously in the following manner: The performer talks about the beauty of flowers in general, and suddenly asks, "Now, for instance, don't you think that a rose in my button hole would vastly improve my appearance? I shall try to make my magic wand bring me one." He then waves his wand toward the right, in order to attract the eyes of the spectators in that direction, and the rose suddenly appears in his button-hole, where it holds its place for the rest of the evening.

The secret arrangement is as follows: A stemless, artificial rose of muslin is secured by a black silk rubber thread, and arrested by a knot. It may be doubled, if necessary, to secure the required elasticity. The rose is held under the arm of the performer as he comes on the stage. The cord to which it is attached then passes over the side of his chest, through the button-hole, where it is attached to the rubber cord; this passes through a small eyelet sewn just underneath the button-hole, on the inside of the coat, and then across the chest, and around to the back, where it is secured to one of the right-hand buttons of the trouser waistband. The rubber band is just long enough to be taut, when the rose is in the button-hole; and thus, when the rose is under the outside armpit, the elastic is stretched, and when

the rose is released by elevating the left arm, the elastic contracts to its normal length, and the rose is snapped into place.

THE MAGIC FLOWER POT *

The performer comes forward, and, after having remarked upon the wonderful properties of some seeds he possesses, he offers to put them to the test. He introduces a little side table, with a thin top, supported by a slim pedestal,—which in turn, is supported by three tripod legs, branching out from the bottom of the pedestal, and supporting it. This he places in any part of the stage the audience may select. A saucer is handed for examination, and while this is going on, the performer shows a flower pot, which may also be handed round, if it is desired. When the performer receives back the last named articles, he places the saucer on the table, and the flower pot on the saucer. The pot is now filled about half-full of mould. This is finely crumpled up, and is sifted through the fingers, which are held about six inches above the pot: thus the performer's hand never enters it. When the pot is nearly full, the performer presses down the mould with a little pestle, which may also be examined, and then sprinkles a few seeds over the top of it. Loading a pistol, and standing at some distance from the table, the performer fires at the pot. Instantly a gigantic flower is seen to have grown in the pot, quite five times the height of the latter, and considerably larger in circumference. A few blossoms are picked, and handed to the audience to show that they are real.

Explanation.—The chief part of the illusion lies in the construction of the table, which, though it appears so slight, has ample room to conceal the plant when

* This trick is one of my own invention, though it has been claimed by many magicians. My original description is to be found in "Mahatma," June, 1899.

it is folded up, in its centre leg. (See Fig. 68.) The three branch legs are opened rather wide, to afford a good solid support, and to prevent any risk of the table being upset. They are made thicker than usual, to conceal the fact that the central pedestal is also somewhat thick for the size of the table. It is in the pedestal that the trick principally rests; it has a very firm base to support the pressure of a spiral spring, *b*, which runs up the inside of the leg. This spring is kept down by the catch, *d*, on one side of the leg, which fits over a metal plate, *f*, to which in turn

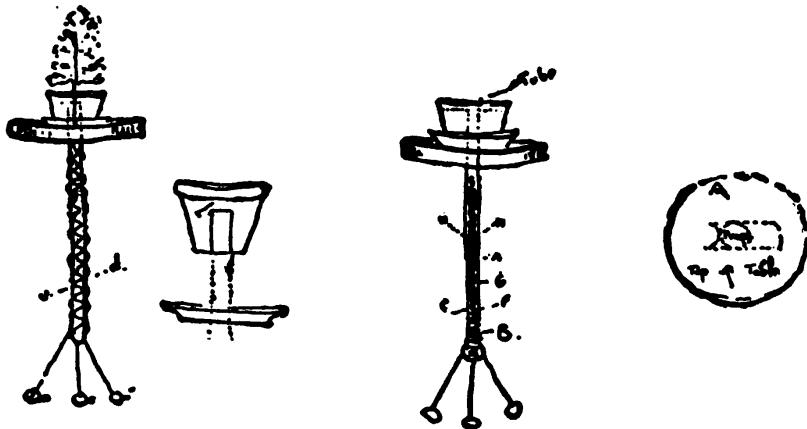


FIG. 68

is attached the spring on the under side. To the upper part of this plate, is fixed a fine steel rod, *g*, pointed at the top, and to which is fastened as many fine stems as space will allow. To these stems, *h*, are fixed expanding flowers (small silk ones are the best). The plant is prevented from shooting right out of the leg by two small catches, *e*, *e*, fixed at the upper extremity of the pillar. The instant it is out, it, of course, expands to its full extent. The bottom of the rod, *G*, is void of flowers, as it is covered by the flower pot. When *G* is well pressed home, the plate, *f*, is made fast by the catch *c*, and is only loosened by pulling the thread *c* which travels to the hand of an assistant behind the

scenes. It then flies up to its full height, and until stopped by the catches, *e*, *e*. In the centre of the table there is a trap corresponding to the hollow pillar. This trap, of course, cannot be constructed in the ordinary way, as the "door" would be in the way; it is therefore made as follows: A portion of the table is made to slide out. This sliding piece is made square, and slides in a groove, leaving a small circular opening in the centre. A very small rim, almost unnoticeable, projects upward from the top of the table. This allows you a "grip," in causing the part to slide back, and thus reduces the effort necessary.

So much for the table; now for the minor arrangements. The examined saucer is exchanged (by means of the *servante*, or by the side pockets in the breast of the coat) for one prepared by having a circular hole cut in the bottom, just the size of the trap in the table. Over this, upon the top, is pasted a thin piece of glazed paper, so that a casual glance will not reveal the fact that it is faked. This is placed over the trap in the table,—and this explains the reason for the central steel rod being sharply pointed—so that it may break through the paper cleanly. The pot used is the one exhibited. It will now be seen why the performer should avoid having it examined, if it be possible to prevent it. The pot has a rather larger hole than is usual, and also has a small rim projecting upward, round the hole. The rim is used to afford a base over which a tin tube may be fitted,—the latter being adjusted at any convenient moment by the performer during his preparations. The mould is now sprinkled round the pot, between the tube and the sides, and pressed tight with the hands. This serves two purposes:—The mould being light, supports the tin, and keeps it in place; and the weight of it balances the table, and serves to keep it steady. If it has been ascertained that the spring and catch are on the same side as one of the lower legs, there should

be no movement at all. The real roses are palmed in by the performer, and distributed among the audience. If the flower pot is short and "squat," it will make the flower look higher than it really is.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUDING INSTRUCTIONS

"I HAVE heard," says Professor Theobald, in his "Magic and Its Mysteries," "some professors of magic say that it is madness to publish a book on conjuring, letting people into the secret of 'How it's done; ' that it would ruin the art by making its mysteries common property the world over; and that a performer could never with confidence give a performance or entertainment, if he had the uncomfortable feeling that some one present knew all about it, and would make the exhibition a failure by constantly crying out, 'That's done so-and-so.' I am far from taking this gloomy view of the subject. I believe that the more the art of magic is understood the greater favour it will meet with; and I cannot conceive any *gentleman* who, through the medium of a work on the subject has gained possession of some of its workings, standing up for the mere sake of attracting attention and exposing how a certain trick is performed; neither do I believe that any audience would receive him but with hisses. An audience should always be on the alert to make a discovery if possible, and if successful, so much the more to their credit; but I do not think that any one would take delight in humiliating a performer when the conjuring was done in an expert manner, and the secret not seen, but only through the medium of a book."

During the course of this book, I have on several occasions spoken of the conjuror's assistant. If an assistant can be procured, so much the better, but all the illusions I have described, with one or two exceptions, can be performed by the magician himself, and

without the aid of any assistant, by slightly altering the version of the trick as herein given. Certainly a bad assistant is worse than none. If you can procure one who is quick and apt, so much the better. If not, depend upon no one but yourself, and then, if anything goes wrong, you have only yourself to blame.

By all means obtain the assistance of some one to play the piano if possible,—since a little music is almost essential for the successful performance of some tricks. Occasionally, during the use of a piece of apparatus, the pulling of a thread, etc., a slight noise is produced, and the spectators would be prevented from hearing this, were music going on at the time. Do not perform longer than forty or forty-five minutes at a stretch; both performer and audience are better for a short rest at the end of that period, and an interval of ten minutes or so should be allowed. This will also enable the performer to rearrange his table, and his shelf (*servante*), which should always be kept as clear as possible, and which, at the end of that length of time, would probably be full of articles, which had been deposited there during a performance.

It is essential to keep the hands warm, and they should also be moist. It is impossible to conjure with cold, dry hands. Gloves should be worn, if necessary; and, just prior to the performance, a little glycerine should be rubbed over the palms, or resin, or a special wax which may be procured at conjuring depôts.

For every performance one program should be written out, and one printed. The printed program should be handed amongst the spectators. Of this, immediately.

The private program, for the performer's own use, should be hung up behind his screen or in some other convenient place. On this private program should be detailed every property of each trick, down to the veriest trifle, for on trifles often depends the whole

success of the trick. It is also well to have written out beforehand what articles should be upon the shelf, at the commencement of each part. Have the properties of each trick *complete*. If a knife is required in three tricks, have three knives, and not one, and let this principle be observed throughout.

And now a few words on arranging a program.

String your tricks together as much as possible, so that they make a connection, as it were, one with the other, and not separate tricks. If you can do this, the performance will go far more smoothly and effectually, both to the audience and yourself.

In printing your program the tricks should never be called by their proper names, neither should your audience be initiated into what you intend to do. Make the affair as mysterious as possible! For instance, you might prepare your program somewhat as follows:

The Wanderings of a Handkerchief.

Magic Confectionery.

Wine Where Not Required.

A Miniature Conflagration.

How a Watch Got Injured.

A Magic Marksman.

A Watch That Will Go!

The Fairy Drawer.

The Intelligence of Two Cards, and How One Got Into Trouble.

Simon, the Cellarer, and His Wine Bottle.

Magic Power.

Military Preparations.

Fairy Flowers.

Children and Their Toys.

A Scene of Eastern Art.

The above can, of course, be very much worked up for effect, but my object has been to show how different things may be from what one may be led to expect.

No one, from the above list, could form any idea of what the performer really intends to do, and yet the program is strictly correct.

Do not attempt to crowd too many tricks into a program. Each trick should be given its appropriate time, and endeavour to make each one spread over as great a length of time as possible, rather than the reverse. Do not hurry anything; on the contrary let all your movements, words, and actions be deliberate and decisive.

As regards the *light*. This should be evenly distributed,—care being taken that no lights, and no mirrors are at the rear of the stage, but always *in front* of the performer and his table. Have your audience in front of you as much as possible; never at the sides, and, needless to say, never behind you.

A word or two as to *nervousness* may not be out of place. If the performer can bring himself to imagine, for the time being, that he is the most wonderful individual in creation, and that the objects really obey his word of command, nervousness will depart, and success be assured. Be impressive in your manner, rather than jocund and light, and endeavour to impress your audience with the idea that you really possess magical powers. This is a mere piece of acting, but all acting of this kind is successful upon the public stage. A dull, nervous performer, however clever he may be, is sure to make the spectators feel uncomfortable, and thus spoil their enjoyment. Always endeavour to cultivate a cheerful manner, even under difficulties, and you will find your audience similarly affected. Take every possible means of increasing the effect of a trick by means of by-play, etc., and become, if possible, totally oblivious of your surroundings, and think only of yourself and what you are doing. This can be acquired only by constant practice in private, and only by such practice is success assured.

Not a little benefit may be derived from attending

entertainments given by other conjurors, and every opportunity of doing so should be taken. In listening attentively to the remarks of the audience, you will gain many points, not only as to how a trick may be improved, but also as to what movements in the execution of a trick are unnecessary and awkward, and consequently to be avoided. Study, also, the "patter" of all conjurors that you hear.

In performing, arrange so as to have your audience *in front* of you, as otherwise it will be utterly impossible for you to use a *servante*. Have your screen within a few feet of your table, so that you have ready to hand any articles that are not required until the moment of their use. If no proper screen is to hand a clothes-horse with a fancy table-cloth over it will serve admirably.

Always perform your program several times in private first. By this means you gain confidence in yourself, and also find out your weak points. Above all, practise the art of *talking* as well as acting, so that when the time arrives for your performance, you feel quite at home, and know exactly what to do, and how to do it. Do not hurry over a trick; let the eyes of the company have time to see what you hold in your hand, or what you cover on the table; so that you are not mortified by hearing them say, after a change has been effected, "What was there before? It was hidden so quickly I couldn't see."

And now I feel that my pleasant task is at an end. If the amateur will follow the suggestions and advice given in the preceding pages, he will have no difficulty in presenting a first-class conjuring entertainment to his friends—or to a larger audience, as the case may be—and I hope that the present book may have assisted him in bringing this about. Long may he delight and amuse and charm with the witchery of—

MAGIC AND MYSTERY!